



THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 33.

Price, Five Cents.



AS THE COACH DREW UP AT MINER'S REST TAVERN IT WAS SEEN THAT BUFFALO BILL HELD THE REINS.—(CHAPTER CXLV.)



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BUFFALO BILL'S VICTORIES.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER CXLV.

THE SILENT PASSENGER.

The stage to Paradise Mountain rolled along rapidly, a new driver upon the box, but one who seemed to know the trail.

The last two drivers who had taken the coach on its westward run had been killed by outlaws, and it was a question as to whether another man would take the almost fatal risk of the trail, when a stranger had volunteered to drive through, and the boss had taken him at his word, and told him to mount the box.

Who he was, no one seemed to know, or care, and bets were freely offered and taken that he would arrive at Poker Paradise, as the mining camp on Paradise Mountain was called, with his "toes turned up," or find a grave by the trail side.

But the boss offered fifty dollars for any man who could drive six-in-hand to take the old hearse through to Paradise, and the stranger had taken him up.

There were but two passengers, a young woman, a strange person to see in that wild land, and a man

who looked like a tenderfoot, and who had not spoken a word to his fair companion, on the driver, in two days' travel.

Away from "The Flats" rolled the coach, the new driver upon the box, and he certainly handled the reins in a way that showed that he knew how to drive, even along a Rocky Mountain trail.

Some dozen miles had the coach gone, when, after passing the relay, where fresh horses were put in, the passenger who had been so silent along the way, suddenly spoke, and what he said was to the point.

"See here, miss, I know you and what yer game is in coming west to the mining country."

The girl was so surprised at being addressed by the man that she turned pale, while it seemed that the horses must have heard his voice, for they nearly came to a halt.

But the young woman quickly recovered herself, and asked:

"Who am I, and why have I come to this country?"

"You are playing a little game you think all your own; but I got on to it, and I came to trump your

ace, so I say I wants yer to hand out yer money and valuables, for I know you have got a snug fortune along."

"I will not be robbed by you, or any other man—ho, driver!"

The coach came to a halt, the passenger calling out:

"This man seeks to rob me, and I claim your protection!"

The driver saw that a revolver covered him, held by the hitherto silent passenger, and he said:

"I can't help you, miss."

"You are a coward!" called out the woman, while the man said:

"You are a wise man, driver; I have come far to get the fortune this girl has, and your life ends if you interfere."

"I want your guns," and, leaning out of the coach window, the man took the revolvers and knife from the driver's belt.

"Now, miss, I am going to leave you here, so I want your money and jewels, for if I did not take all, you'd be robbed further on, as I happen to know."

Entreaties and tears were in vain, and the poor girl was forced to give up her riches, all in a small leather satchel she carried, while the driver looked on, seemingly afraid to make an effort to help her.

"Now, my man, I'll trouble you to hand out a trunk from your coach top," and the robber sprang out.

It was handed down, unlocked, and revealed a saddle, bridle, roll of blankets and bag of provisions, along with a short rifle.

"I came fixed, you see—now, I shall kill five of your horses, and take the best one to ride, so that you will have to walk to the next relay, and pursuit will be slow."

As he spoke, the man held his revolver in hand, while he walked alongside of the horses, examining each animal closely to make his selection, and the woman, having gotten out of the coach, was watching him eagerly.

Having made his selection, the man called out:

"Take the harness off this horse, driver, while I shoot the others—come, be lively about it."

The driver sprung from the box, fell, stumbled forward and rose by the side of the man, while he held a revolver in his hand and cried:

"Quick! Drop that weapon!"

But the man attempted to turn upon the driver and fire, when quickly came a flash and report, and the robber of the young girl dropped dead.

The girl uttered a cry of horror, then one of delight, for the driver took the satchel from the grasp of the dead man and said:

"Here is your bag, miss."

"And I called you a coward—can you forgive me?"

"Oh, yes, for I played it, when I saw that I was caught, as I did not look for trouble within the coach."

"I gave up my belt of weapons, but had two other guns, and played scared to get to use them."

"And did so; but who is he?"

"Do you not know, miss?"

"I never saw him before."

"Yet he seemed to have come on the coach just to rob you, as he knew what you had along in money and valuables."

"I cannot understand it."

"Well, miss; we must get on, and if you'll ride on the box with me, I'll put the box in the coach, and let me tell you that I feel sure that we will be held up again on the trail, so hide your money and valuables, leave your empty satchel in the coach, and remember that we were held up, our man escaped with your booty, and one of my horses, and the other I killed."

"Yes, but where shall I hide my valuables?"

"Will you trust me with them, for I am not the rather tough customer I may seem?"

"Certainly, I will trust you."

"Then, pack all in my top boots, miss."

This was done, the body was placed in the stage, and, mounting the box to a seat with the driver, who had taken one of the team out, thrown the harness on the coach top, while the animal was staked out near to feed until sent after.

Then the driver took the reins and drove on once more, the lady passenger greatly admiring his superb handling of his team.

Only a few miles had they gone, when a shot flashed in front of them and a bullet passed over the driver's head.

"That is a hint to halt!" cried a stern voice.

"An' I kin take a hint, fer I has haltèd," answered the driver, as several men, wearing masks, appeared, rifles in hand.

"Well, what do I get, driver?"

"You'd get a rope about your neck, if I had my way."

"Come, don't be too fresh, for two of your kind got that way and went under, and if the lady hadn't been on the box with you, I'd have shot you."

"Do you see this dead man in ther ole huss, pard thief?" asked the driver.

"You have got a dead man there, fer sure!"

"I has, an' he were a passenger, and he held up ther coach from inside, and got shot; but I couldn't prevent his pard, also a passenger, from robbin' this young leddy, stealin' one of my horses an' gettin' away; but ther empty bag is in ther ole huss, an' thet's about all yer'll git, I guess."

"Then you were robbed, miss, by fellow passengers?" asked the road agent leader.

"That dead man, sir, seemed to be well posted as to what I had with me, but how I do not know, and took the contents of my satchel and all I had of value."

"And escaped?"

"Yes, an' got on one of my huss horses, too."

The leader examined the empty satchel, looked fixedly at the dead man and said:

"I do not know him; but they have gotten the best of me."

"What did you have, miss?"

"A few thousands in money, and as much more in valuables."

"Well worth going after."

"Come, men; we'll strike his trail."

"How far back was it, driver?"

"About three miles—yer'll find ther trail of his horse, an' as ther critter are lame he can't go fast."

The outlaw leader gave a call to his men, and, mounting their horses, they dashed away, while the driver laughed and said:

"They'll find the horse tied, and think he gave him up until they see he is not lame, and then come back after us, for they will think they have been tricked; but it is catching before hanging, miss," and the driver sent the team along at a run.

At the next relay he got six fresh horses, and they were kept in a run until the coach drew up at Poker Paradise, as tough a place as was then on the Overland Trail.

"Ho, Buffalo Bill, you driving the coach?" called

out the landlord of the Miners' Rest Tavern and the Ace of Diamonds saloon, adjoining conjointly.

"For this run, Dave, I took the box, and I brought you a lady passenger, who wants the best your old roost can provide, and an inside passenger who only needs the grave digger," answered the driver.

"Just your style, Buffalo Bill, to bring down game, human or otherwise."

"Your servant, miss, and I'm awful sorry you was robbed."

"But I was not robbed, sir, thanks to this gentleman, whom you called Buffalo Bill—and are you the great scout, sir, known as Buffalo Bill?" and she turned to the one who had brought her through in safety.

"My name is William Cody, miss, and I am an army scout, while the boys call me Buffalo Bill," was the reply.

CHAPTER CXLVI.

AT POKER PARADISE.

The young lady who arrived at Poker Paradise was both young and good-looking, and she was at once an object of interest to the dwellers in that very tough community, young and old, honest miners, gamblers, desperadoes and all.

Landlord Dave gave her the best quarters he had, and they were bad enough, and offered to send her meals to her, but she preferred to eat in the public dining-room, she said, and her entrance caused the half a hundred who ate there to become as quiet as a church meeting.

"Who is she, Pard Cody?" asked Dave of the scout.

"You know as much about her as I do, Dave."

"Why did she come here?"

"Ask her, for I won't."

"Why was it you drove the coach through?"

"Well, there had been two men killed on the box, and I wanted to see if I could find out just who did it."

"And you found out?"

"Well, Dave, I found out that one robber was a passenger, and then we were held up by men of the road who had no connection with the man I killed."

"And you are on a scout for road agents, Pard Cody?"

"I am on a little secret scout I hope to make pan

out well," and Buffalo Bill turned to the Chinese servant of the hotel, whom the miners called "Dave's he-chambermaid," and said:

"Well, Washee-Washee, what is it?"

"Melican girlee say come see her dammee quickee."

"I don't believe she said it, Washee-Washee, but I'll go," and the scout went, while Landlord Dave, who had an eye into the business of every one in Poker Paradise, not neglecting his own, however, muttered:

"Buffalo Bill knows who that girl is, and what brought her here, only he won't tell," and, turning to the greasy hotel register, he continued:

"Amy Andrews is the name she wrote, and that tells nothing; whether she is married or single, and she writes as bold a hand as a man.

"No pretty woman ever came to Poker Paradise that trouble did not follow—I must know all about her."

In the meantime Buffalo Bill was following Washee-Washee along the upper hallway, when two burly men came along, and one of them, seizing the Chinaman, called out:

"Buck, gimme yer blade ter slit ther ear o' this heathen."

With a yell, the Chinaman tried to break away, but the other bully seized him and whipped out his knife, while he said:

"I'll cut off the right one and keep it fer luck, Dan."

"Release that man!" and Buffalo Bill confronted the two men.

"You chips in, does yer, Buffalo Bill?" said one.

"I guess yer don't know us," said the other.

"I know you as a pair of inhuman devils that I will not allow to mutilate that poor Chinaman as you have others," was the reply.

"We'll hand you, Buf'ler, when we hes done with him," said one.

"Will you release that man?" asked Cody, sternly.

"Not much."

Just how it happened neither of the two men could explain afterward; but one was seized and hurled bodily through the window to the ground, ten feet below, and the other followed him so quickly that the first one had no time to get lonesome without his pard.

"He, he, Buf'ler Billee stronger Melican man.

"Chinaman no forgettee Bill Codee, he goodee friend," cried the delighted Chinaman.

Buffalo Bill started on along the hallway when he saw Amy Andrews before him, she having witnessed what had occurred.

"It is a rough place you have come to, Miss Andrews, and I am sorry you were alarmed."

"I was alarmed, but you seem to know how to handle the wild element here, Mr. Cody—I never saw such an exhibition of strength, and would not have missed it."

"You sent for me, I believe, miss?"

"Yes, I——"

"Me tellee scoutee you say come damme quickee—he come," said the Chinaman.

"The swearing and the quickee is yours, Washee-Washee; but I did send for you, Mr. Cody."

"How can I serve you, miss?"

"Sit down, and let me say that you have already served me so well that I dislike to ask other favors of you; but I am here on a special mission, and one that will take me on a trip through the mining camps; perhaps, from all I have learned, to the Indian village, and I wish to ask you if you will be my guide and adviser, my protector, and you have but to name your price for your services."

"Miss Andrews, I am ever ready to serve one in the line of duty, especially a woman, and my services are paid for by the government, so that the only expense to you will be for your outfit and such expenditures as you may have to make; but I would have suggested that you went to the fort, and placed yourself under the protection of Colonel Carson, who would have been glad to have served you, I know."

"No; I prefer to go my own way about the duty I have to perform, and yet it may be that I shall have to visit the fort.

"I wish, however, to remain quietly here for some days before I start upon my work."

"That will suit me better, miss, as you may recall that I told you I was driving the coach for a purpose, and I desire to complete my work before entering upon another.

"Within a week I shall be at your service."

"That will do, and to-morrow we will discuss the service I wish you to undertake, and I will be guided by you in the matter, for I have seen you tried, and I have known of your remarkable career."

Buffalo Bill bowed, rose and left the room, to find Landlord Dave awaiting him, with the remark:

"Bill, you have got yourself into trouble."

"How so?"

"Taking up for that heathen—better have let them fellers slit his ears."

"That is not my style, Dave, to look on at a cruel and inhuman act against a man who could not protect himself."

"Do you know who them two men is?"

"No, and I care less."

"They is known as Double Death, and they runs this camp."

"They are brutes."

"They swears they will make you eat that Chinaman's ears, and they has gotten him in the saloon, waitin' fer you; but my advice is that you had better leave town."

Buffalo Bill laughed and said:

"Don't get scared, Dave, before you are hurt."

"But I knows the men."

"Well, as I came here for a purpose, and I will have to go to the saloon, I suppose trouble will follow; but I shall not seek it, nor avoid it."

"Don't go, Bill, fer they is red hot agin yer."

"If that is the case they will look me up, and the trouble may as well be gotten over with at once."

"Are you going to the saloon?"

"Yes, but I have warned you."

"Thanks," was the dry response, and Buffalo Bill, entering by a side door, glanced over the large crowd gathered in the saloon.

A hush fell upon all at his presence, and the two men who were looking for him were caught playing cards, and were quickly covered by the scout, who said:

"You are looking for me, I hear?"

"We is, but yer hes sneaked in an' got ther drop on us unfair," growled one.

"This is a public place, and you thought to bluff me off from coming here; but I shall block your game."

"Dave, untie that Chinaman they have lying on the floor at their feet."

Landlord Dave obeyed, and Washee-Washee crawled on his hands and knees to the feet of Buffalo Bill, who said:

"Chinaman, take Landlord Dave's knife and slit

the ears of each one of those men, unless they swear right here and now not to molest you."

"Me so gladee," and the Chinaman seized the knife.

"Does yer mean it, Buf'ler Bill?" roared one of the two men.

"I do, unless you swear, and, more, I give you just thirty minutes to get out of this camp."

"Yer hes ther drop on us, and we knows yer fer a dead shot," replied one.

"I dares yer ter meet us in a fair game o' stand up and fight," said the other.

"I met you an hour ago, if you remember."

"Will you leave this camp now, or after your ears have been cut so that I'll know you next time we meet?"

"He's got us, pard."

"Yas."

"Shall we go?"

"Yas, an' wait our time."

"Go, now, and quick, or I'll pierce your ears with a bullet," said Buffalo Bill.

The two men rose slowly, amid a deadly silence, turned toward the door Buffalo Bill had entered, and then one wheeled suddenly, a revolver leveled.

His weapon and Cody's flashed together, and then followed a third shot.

Buffalo Bill had fired a second time.

His first bullet had entered the brain of the man who had fired at him—his second had actually cut through the ear of his terrified companion.

"I have marked you, sir; go!"

With a yell of terror, the man sprang out of the door, followed by a howl of admiration from the crowd, while Landlord Dave said:

"You did 'em up, Pard Cody, and they were the two wust men in ther mining camps, who hast kilt a dozen men each."

"Come, take a drink."

"Thank you, no; for I am tired and will go to bed; but I take the coach out in the morning, you know," and, followed by cheers from the crowd, who had long been terrorized by the desperadoes known as Double Death, Buffalo Bill left the saloon, after telling the landlord to bury the dead man at his expense.

CHAPTER CXLVII.

THE CHINAMAN'S WARNING TO BUFFALO BILL.

Miss Amy Andrews was awakened early the next morning by the departure of the stage coach, and, going to the window, she saw Buffalo Bill upon the box.

"What a wonderful man he is," she muttered, "to look so serene this morning, after what he passed through last night and yesterday.

"He is the very man for my work," she said, for, late as it was, the Chinaman had gone to her room the night before and told about the scene in the saloon.

At breakfast the landlord had also told her the story, and she heard it discussed at the table, always with admiring words for Buffalo Bill.

After breakfast, she arranged with Landlord Dave for the purchase of a good saddle horse, explaining that she had her saddle and bridle in her trunk, and asking:

"Can I hire a man you can trust to go with me through the camps for the next few days?"

"Yes, miss, or is it missus——" began Landlord Dave.

"Suit yourself, landlord, and I am satisfied—miss or Mrs.," was the smiling reply, and Dave happened to remark:

"I knows the very man, Miss Andrews, Old Bear Claws, who is just now in the camps.

"He is a trapper and mountain hunter, but I guess has a eye in search of gold."

"Very well, I will see him, sir," said Miss Andrews, and soon after the landlord ushered into the room Old Bear Claws.

Off came his hat, and, bowing low, he said:

"Yer sarvant, ma'am. I're as tickled ter see yer as tho' I'd run a nail in my foot."

Miss Andrews smiled and motioned him to be seated, while the landlord seemed about to accept the invitation, too, but was squelched by Old Bear Claws, who said:

"Say, pard, if you hes bizness with ther leddy, I'll call ag'in."

"Oh, no; I merely wished to see if Miss Andrews needed my services," said the nonplussed Dave.

The landlord having departed, the old trapper took a seat across the room from the door, and the woman had a good look at him.

He was a character in his way, dressed in buck-

skin, wearing a foxskin cap and with necklaces of bear claws about his neck, such as Indian chiefs wear.

He wore his hair and beard long, and both were threaded with gray, while his face was a shrewd one, bold and cunning.

"Yer wished ter see me, miss, Landlord Dave said."

"Yes, I am anxious to learn something of the country here, to visit the mining district and see the people.

"I have purchased a horse, and I will hire one for you, and pay you well to be my guide for a few days, after which the scout, Buffalo Bill, will be my escort and I will ask him about taking you as an assistant.

"Do you know him?"

"Buf'ler Bill?"

"Yes."

"Who don't, miss?"

"He seems to be a popular man here, and a fearless one."

"He hain't got no fear in him—he's like my son, I like him so, miss."

"I am glad to know it, and I'll——"

But Miss Andrews stopped suddenly to watch the old trapper, who had taken a revolver from his belt and was aiming it at the door knob.

Then she uttered a startled cry, as the revolver went off and a hole was cut through the door, while a yeli was heard outside, running feet, and the old man laughed and said:

"Don't be skeert, miss, but it were only Landlord Dave list'nin', fer I seen his whiskers come through the keyhole, an' he hed his ear thar, so I jest nred ter miss his head—here they comes now."

Miss Andrews laughed, in spite of her fear that the landlord might have been wounded, and when he appeared, with Sorrel Top, his red-headed clerk, and Washee-Washee, he was as white as a ghost with fear, and stammered forth:

"I hope you are not hurt, miss, for we heard a shot up here?"

"It were me did it, Landlord Dave; jist seein' ef I cud put a bullet through ther keyhole ter show ther leddy how I cud shoot; but I missed it," said old Bear Claws.

"Oh, that was it, was it—'scuse me, miss," and Landlord Dave and his aids departed, while Old Bear Claws said:

"Waal, ef he didn't skip lively, I are a weepin' liar, miss; but it were fun ter see him run, an' I guesses he hev'n't got ther cur'osity he did hev."

Miss Andrews laughed at the comical affair, which she at first feared was a tragedy, and she said:

"As I was telling you, sir, I am glad to know that you and the great scout are such good friends."

"We is, miss, and when I seen him on ther Over-land Trail——"

"You have seen Mr. Cody, then?" eagerly asked the maiden.

"Mister who, ledly?"

"Buffalo Bill, as he is called here?"

"Yas, I hes seen him."

"Where is he now?"

"On ther Mountain trail."

"When did you see him?"

"This mornin', ledly, on the out-bound coach, and he spoke of you."

"Did he send me any message?"

"Thet are what I are gettin' at, ledly."

"I beg pardon."

"It are granted, but fer what, durned ef I knows."

"Waal, I see ther scout, as I were a-sayin', an' he says, says he:

"'Old Bear Claws, how is yer?"

"I told him I were purty peert, consid'rin', and says he:

"'Don't yer want ter do suthin' fer me?"

"Says I:

"'I does."

"Says he:

"'Waal, I promised ther purtiest leetle ledly in these heur parts'—them was his words, ledly—'ter guide her up in ther mountains, on ther trail of a man she wanted to sarcumvint."

"'But I are engaged, at present, in a leetle matter as may detain me some time,' says he."

"'Sg,' says he, 'ef yer'd be so good as ter go and tell her thet a courier from ther fort hed met me after leavin' Poker Paradise, and I find I'll not git back very soon, so send you ter do what she wants did, an' I'll follow as soon as I can; it will be all right, as she kin trust you same as me.'"

It may have been a look of disappointment that crossed the face of the woman, but she answered, quietly:

"Well, as he will follow later, it will be all right, and I have perfect confidence in you, Mister——"

"Old Bear Claws, or jist Claws, miss, fer I hes almost forgot ther name my mammy give me."

"Well, I know that you are all right, as the scout sent you, and I shall start to-morrow upon my work, so I will arrange with you to get what we will need and give you the money."

"Thankee, ledly, an' I'll git thet red-headed fool, Sorrel Top, ter set down ther figgers fer me, as I wants all done squar."

"I have no doubt of that, sir."

"Bear Claws, miss."

"Well, we'll get along famously, Bear Claws, and I wish to start to-morrow."

It was a real grief for Landlord Dave to lose his pretty guest so soon, as he had already begun to spruce up on her account, black the fronts of his boots, put on a new shirt and red tie and part his hair in the middle.

With much good advice, and telling her he would keep her room just as it was for her return, he saw Miss Andrews and Old Bear Claws ride away the next morning, while he was most curious to know where they had gone and what for.

Three days after a group of men waited at the tavern for the return of the coach, which was due, and among them stood the very man Buffalo Bill had driven out of the camp.

It was the survivor of the team known as Double Death, and he had returned to attend the funeral of the man he said was his brother, and intended then taking the coach East.

No one interfered with him, but as the coach appeared and Buffalo Bill was seen on the box, the desperado moved to the corner of the tavern, and, suddenly taking up his blanket roll, drew from it a rifle, and opened fire.

Quick as he was, Buffalo Bill was quicker, for he seemed to have a revolver in his hands with the reins, and the two weapons flashed together.

Buffalo Bill was not hurt, but a bullet cut through his sombrero, while his aim was true, and his shot cut along the head of his would-be assassin, who uttered a wild cry, dropped his rifle and ran around the corner of the tavern.

A moment after a stableman reported that he had mounted his waiting horse, and ridden at break-neck speed for the mountains, his face covered with blood.

"Let him go," said Buffalo Bill, and, turning to

Washee-Washee, who just then got out of the coach, he continued:

"He'd have gotten me, sure, my Chinese Pard, if you had not met me back on the trail and warned me he was waiting for me.

"I'm your pard for life, Chinaman."

Then, turning to Landlord Dave, he continued:

"Dave, I wish you would go to Miss Andrews' room and tell her I have returned, and will be at her service to-morrow morning."

"Miss Andrews' room, Bill?"

"Yes."

"She is not there."

"Then I am glad, if she was out riding and did not see that shooting.

"Tell me when she comes back, Dave."

"Durned if I know when she is coming back."

"What! Has she gone?" asked Buffalo Bill, in surprise.

"Yes; she left several nights ago."

"And alone?"

"No; with Old Bear Claws."

"What?"

"With that white-haired hunter from the mountains, we call Old Bear Claws."

"She went alone with him?"

"Yes."

"And at night?"

"She did."

"This is strange."

"So I thought, but I had an idea you knew about it."

"I knew?"

"Yes, for Old Claws told Sorrel-Top that you had sent him with a message to Miss Andrews."

"The infernal old liar! I did no such thing.

"Dave, there is some mystery about that white-haired old hunter.

"He seems square, but it looks as though he might be crooked.

"Tell me about his coming, and the departure of Miss Andrews with him."

Dave told all he knew, excepting the eavesdropping occurrence, which he wisely kept back, and how the maiden had paid him a good price for his horse, Wonder, and asked him to keep her trunk until her return.

"This is very strange, Dave."

"Yas; it does not look straight.

"But, Bill, you know Trailer Tom?"

"Yes."

"Well, he lost his life the same night."

"He was killed, poor fellow?"

"Yes, and we planted him over with Jake Goss, Dandy Roe and the other boys in the new graveyard, the old one being full."

"Who killed him?" asked Buffalo Bill, indifferently.

"Now, that is the rub.

"It seems Trailer Tom saw Old Bear Claws and Miss Andrews going off that way in the night, and followed them.

"What happened I don't know, but Tom came back here, dying from a wound in his side, and says she shot him."

"She!"

"Yes, Miss Andrews."

"Good God! Can this be possible?"

"Trailer Tom thought it was," was the dry remark of the landlord.

"There was cause for it, then, if she shot him; he was doubtless sneaking on their trail; but now I want rest, and to-morrow I will start on their track, for I don't like the looks of things.

"You have my horse in keeping here, Dave?"

"Yes, and he is a fine one—a man brought him a week ago and said you would come an' git him."

"I will take him in the morning, so order him ready for me at daybreak," and the scout went to his supper and then to his room, while Landlord Dave was a trifle anxious for fear it would be discovered by Buffalo Bill that he had sent Trailer Tom as a spy on the trail of Old Bear Claws and Miss Andrews.

CHAPTER CXLVIII.

ON THE MIDNIGHT TRAIL.

Amiy Andrews had come to the Wild West with a purpose in view.

It might be that revenge swayed her in her determination, but justice to the dead and to herself governed her as well.

She was of a fearless nature, possessed of a strong frame, that could stand much hardships, and she had been reared in the saddle and taught the use of the rifle and revolver from her earliest life in the country.

She had made the venture alone, and had come prepared for all she would have to face and put up with.

When she met Buffalo Bill she felt that he was the very one to aid her, and with Old Bear Claws to act for the scout, she felt contented to go with him, with the hope that the scout would follow on their trail, for she must not fail in the purpose that had brought her to that wild land.

The danger and suffering it might bring upon herself Amy Andrews did not consider for a moment.

And so it was that, thoroughly equipped for her journey, she set forth at night, well mounted, with Bear Claws leading a pack animal thoroughly supplied, and with no fear of the result:

"What are you eying the back trail for so anxiously, Mr. Claws?" asked Amy, as they crossed the river and headed for the mountains.

"I am not sartin but thet ther are a gerloot a-watchin' us."

"What can be his motive?"

"Wal, cur'osity are a bad disease, leddy, an' tho' folks do say as how ther wimmins hes got it all, I guesses Adam dropped in afore it were all g'in out ter Eve, fer man critters do hev thar share, I'll s'war."

Amy's laugh echoed through the pass, and Old Claws said quickly:

"That thar are sweet music, but don't do it no more, fer you'll make ther ripplin' waters, an' ther birds, an' ther wind sighin' in ther trees jealous, 'cause they can't do nuthin' haff so sweet-toned; but then ag'in, I'd hate ter hear thet laff answer'd by a Injun warhoop."

"I'll not be rash again, Mr. Claws; but hark! I did hear a hoof-fall behind us."

"Yer hes good ears, leddy, fer thar are a horse follerin' us, an' he are rid by a man."

After a ride of a mile further, the guide suddenly drew rein and said:

"Miss, does yer see thet rock?"

"Yes."

"Waal, you ride behind it an' wait thar, an' I'll ride on."

"Let ther feller pass, an' I'll soon see what he are up ter, fer I doesn't like my steps dogged."

"No, it is unpleasant."

"Now thar is the rock, an' you wait thar fer me."

Amy quietly turned her horse aside from the trail, and soon was hidden behind the huge rock.

Presently the horseman came in sight, riding slowly, and as the moonlight fell upon him, the maiden recognized the man she had seen ride up and halt at the side of Landlord Dave as they left the hotel.

"That landlord sent him on my trail," she muttered.

Just then, as he was passing, he suddenly halted.

Then he rode on, and disappeared in the distance up the pass.

A moment after she heard a sudden plunge of a horse and frightened snort, and a shot, followed by a cry as though a man had been hit hard.

The next instant there came the rapid clatter of hoofs down the pass.

"He has killed my guide, and he shall not escape," she said, determinedly, and, drawing a revolver from her belt, she urged her horse out into the trail.

Then into full view came a horseman, dashing down the pass.

It was the same that had gone up three minutes before.

"Halt!" cried Amy in ringing tones.

She saw the man start, drop his hand on his revolver and come on.

"Halt! or I fire!" she cried, sternly, though she did not intend then to fire upon him.

"Curse you! take that!" was the savage answer, and, with a flash of his pistol, a bullet cut through the crown of the maiden's hat.

A second shot followed, and she felt a tingling sensation in her arm.

Then Amy Andrews' blood was up, and she, too, fired.

She was in the shadow of the overhanging rock, and indistinctly seen; the man was in the bright moonlight, and a fair target.

She fired but once, and at her shot he reeled in his saddle, seemed about to fall; but, recovering himself, dashed on by, though clinging to his horse with both hands.

"Great God! It is ther girl thet has shot me!"

Such were the words that escaped his lips as he dashed on, and like a statue, her smoking revolver in her hand, she sat in her saddle, gazing after him until he disappeared in the gloom, and the clatter of

his horse's hoofs died away, leaving the silence around unbroken.

Not until Amy heard the approach of footsteps did she start from her reverie, so completely dazed was she by what she had done.

"He fired at me twice, and one bullet went through my hat, the other just grazed my shoulder, and he would have killed me had I not shot him.

"But he did not know he was firing upon a woman, from his words," she muttered, in an absent way.

"Ha! some one is coming, and on foot.

"Can it be the guide?"

"Hallo, leddy, are thet you?" cried Old Claws, coming in sight.

"Yes, and I am glad to see that you are not dead," she said fervently.

"Oh, no, I are like a cat, hard ter kill."

"But he fired on you?"

"He did fer a fact, an' I got it in ther arm, tho' it are no more'n a flea bite.

"Ye see, I put my critters in ther pines, an' I laid ter catch ther galoot with my lariat.

"I throw'd it prime, but it did not go over his head jist right an' he wheeled about, an' let me hev it.

"I called ter my critter, an' he thought I were callin' other pards an' just got down ther pass.

"But, what in thunder, leddy, were all thet shootin' down heur?"

"I believed he had killed you and tried to stop him.

"He did not halt, believed I was a man, and fired on me twice, cutting through my hat with one bullet, and just clipping my shoulder with another.

"I then fired in self-defense."

"Bully fer you."

"And I hit him."

"Bully fer you, leetle gal. Did he drop?"

"No; he reeled in his saddle, as though hard hit, dropped his revolver, and went out of sight down the pass, holding on with both hands to the saddle."

"I hope he may tumble off an' break his durned neck, ef yer bullet didn't do fer him."

"I hope I have not hurt him seriously, for I would not like his life on my hands," said Amy, sadly.

"It hain't nothin', when yer gits use ter it.

"At fust yer does see sperits at night, but arter a while they lets yer rest.

"Yes, thar be his pistol, an' it are, as I thought, Trailer Tom, fer heur are his name.

"Now, we'll ride on, leddy, an' I'll jist take a trail as is not gin'rally know'd ter Poker Ranch gerloots, fer thet Trailer Tom evident thought thar were more of us, an' ef he hain't much hurted he'll be arter us.

"Ef he are got it hard, then he hes pards as will strike our trail."

"Then let us hasten on, and once we have found Mr. Cody I will have no fear," said Amy, anxiously.

"Yas, Bill are a horse ter let.

"Now, I'll jist mount my critter, an' ef I hain't a liar, we is a-goin' ter hev a leetle goose-pickin' in ther air."

"What is that?" asked Amy.

"Goose-pickin' are ther English fer snow fallin', leddy, an' we wants ter find shelter afore it begins."

Old Claws went after his horses, and, mounting, the two rode on, the guide turning out of the regular trail at a point where a rivulet crossed it, and keeping in the waterbed for the distance of a mile, in spite of the rough riding over the slippery stones.

Then he reached a plateau, emerging out of the forest upon it, just as the snow began to descend in huge, feathery flakes, that, in spite of their beauty, in that desolate spot, and in the darkness of the night, looked weird and forbidding, and sent a chill to the heart of Amy.

As they progressed the snow fell more heavily, and when at last the dawn broke the skies were seen to be overcast, the ground was white, and there was every evidence that the snow would continue.

"We'll have ter rest ther horses, leddy, in yonder cañon, an' you kin git a nice leetle nap.

"Then we'll press on ontill we reach ther camp where I are ter take yer," said Old Bear Claws.

"I leave all to you, sir," answered the maiden, with perfect confidence in her guide.

In a secluded nook, where the snow had not reached, Old Claws erected a blanket shelter for Amy, and spread her a soft couch of leaves.

Then he built a fire, and soon had a delicious cup of coffee, broiled venison and biscuit for their breakfast, and both ate with a relish.

The horses were lariatied out under the shelter of a cliff, where the grass was not covered with snow, and, throwing several logs on the fire, Old Claws also sought rest.

It was late in the afternoon when the guide awoke, and he was evidently angry with himself for having overslept, for he muttered something about tons of

snow having fallen, and darkness catching them before they reached the camp.

He hastily got dinner, and then awoke Amy, who was wholly rested and in a most cheerful humor.

Eating a hearty meal, the two then mounted, both warmly muffled up, and the horses were turned on the trail they were to follow.

Once out of the sheltered cañon, and all was a sea of snow before them, and only the instinct of the old hunter could guide them then.

Amy realized this, and said nothing to distract his attention.

His face was calm and his eyes most watchful, as though he fully appreciated the danger they were facing.

The storm was momentarily increasing in violence, and the snow was deepening and became tedious traveling for the horses.

Yet, on they struggled, the guide unswervingly holding his way with a steadiness that gave Amy renewed confidence in him.

At last darkness began to settle upon the earth, but there was no thought of a halt for rest or food.

They must press on to the camp, for a few more hours would prevent travel altogether.

In advance went Old Claws, and close behind followed Wonder, showing more nerve and endurance than did the animal of the guide, hardy as he was.

Soon the darkness grew intense, and the snow blinded them, yet still on they moved.

"By Heaven! I've struck my own trail again."

The words came from Old Bear Claws, and Amy heard them, and from the easy traveling of the horses it was evident that they had circled around and gotten into the track of snow they had before broken.

A moment the guide halted, and then branched off in the very teeth of the storm.

There was an ascent of a hill, and the fierce, cold wind struck them hard, and presently Old Bear Claws halted suddenly and cried:

"To the right, for we are on the edge of a precipice."

The border dialect had been dropped in his sudden alarm, and he glanced quickly backward.

But no answer came

"Girl!"

No response.

"Good God! She has gone over the cliff!"

So it seemed, for nowhere was the horse and his fair rider visible, and, dismounting, Old Claws found they had been traveling on the very edge of a cliff for a hundred yards.

Back on the same trail he went, and then halted suddenly.

"Yes, she has gone."

A great bank of snow had broken from the path at his feet, and with it had gone Wonder and his mistress.

But how far down?

Into what kind of an abyss?

These questions the old hunter could not answer, and loudly he hailed:

"Ho! down below there?"

No answer came.

"Oho! Miss Andrews!"

Still no answer, and, shivering, wretched, with death staring him in the face, Old Claws remounted his horse, and rode slowly away from the fatal spot.

CHAPTER CXLIX.

THE MAD SPORT.

To say that the citizens of Poker Paradise were slightly worked up by the escape of one of the Double Death, would be to draw it mildly.

Those dwellers on the outskirts of the town were most desirous of keeping a lookout for the return of the man, for they confidently expected his return.

The snowstorm in the upper mountains had only come upon the valley in drifts, and had soon been blown away, or melted by the sun.

But the white mountains, as seen from the camps, proved that the storm had been severe up there, and was deep enough to last, and this was a cause of anxiety to Buffalo Bill, regarding the fate of Amy Andrews.

The mysterious disappearance of the maiden from the town had also excited the curiosity of the people, and her name was on every tongue.

The return of Trailer Tom from a night scout, and wounded by a woman, also caused wonder, for no one could understand why he had been shot, and, being dead, he could not make the secret known, while Landlord Dave was as silent as an oyster upon the subject.

With all this to talk about, gossip was circulating pretty freely in Poker Paradise during the ten

days that Buffalo Bill lay at the hotel, fretting that the snow kept him from following the trail of Old Bear Claws and Amy Andrews.

That it would be impossible to trail them, after the severe snowstorm, Bill well knew, but he had formed a plan to discover the retreat of the old hunter in the mountains, and once he did that, all would be plain sailing for him.

One night, while the winds were whistling through the streets and came moaning, and in great gusts from the mountains, and their chill breaths had caused all who loved comfort to hug closely the huge fireplaces in their cabins, there was heard a series of wild, unearthly yells.

Then came the clatter of hoofs, and down the main street, and coming from the mountain, dashed a horseman.

The animal was at full speed, and his rider sat high in his saddle, a revolver in each hand, and his lips issued yell after yell that were demoniacal in their wildness.

"It are ther Double Death thet's left," shouted several who got a good look at the seemingly mad horseman.

"The wound Buffalo Bill give him in ther head hes made him crazy," cried another.

"Yes, he hey gone clean mad," said a miner.

"Then he'll do damage yit in Poker Paradise."

Such were the expressions that went the rounds of the crowds that had seen or heard the wild horseman.

Buffalo Bill had paid no heed to the yells until told by Landlord Dave who had made them.

Then he said:

"If the poor fellow has gone mad, he must be looked to, and I can readily follow his trail in the morning, and will do so, and also try and find out about Old Bear Claws and Miss Andrews."

It was not daybreak when the scout rode away from the tavern.

"Thet's so, ye'd better go; but is yer well ag'in, Bill?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Don't thank me, fer its yer constittoshun ter thank, pard.

"We wishes yer luck, an' ef yer thinks thet mad critter are comin' back, we won't detain yer."

With a light laugh Buffalo Bill rode on, and, as it

was now getting light, he dismounted and examined the trail for tracks.

These he soon found, and, noting them carefully, remounted and went on his way at a swift canter.

The trail of the madman, which was very plain after leaving the vicinity of the town, led him toward his own ranch, and went on by it.

But, as it was now noon, he determined to stop for dinner, and then go on, for the trail was circling around toward the larger range of mountains where it was his intention to go in search of Miss Andrews.

The snow still lay on the ground here and there, and the mountain tops were yet white; but he felt he would have little difficulty in traveling.

The Haunted Ranch, where Buffalo Bill had his home, had once been a mine, and the discovery of that mine had caused the former owners to be mysteriously put to death by unknown parties.

But Buffalo Bill had solved the mystery of the ghostly forms seen at the ranch, and which had given it the name of being haunted, and continued to dwell there, with no dread of unearthly visitants.

He had, as his companions, Bricktop, head herdsman of the ranch, a border character whom he had thrashed severely and thereby gained his everlasting friendship, and two young cowboys, whose duty consisted in looking after the cattle and ponies that pastured in the valleys, and on the plains nearby.

No more desirable situation for the home of a man whose life was in daily danger of death could be found than the Haunted Ranch, for its approaches were such that it was a regular stronghold, and the power of its owner to hold it against superior numbers had been severely tested on more than one occasion.

"Waal, ef it hain't good fer sore eyes ter see yer, pard, then string me up fer a Chineese.

"I feerd yer hed tarned yer toes up ter ther daisies an' we were jist talkin' about goin' ter Poker Paradise ter clean out ther whole durned town out of revenge.

"Wasn't we, Sam?"

The speaker was Bricktop, a red-headed specimen of the border who was a curiosity in his way.

The one he appealed to, with a little more regard for the truth, was one of the cowboys—wild, harum-scarum fellows that loved the life they led more than any other that could be offered them—and he replied:

"We were going to Poker Paradise, fer a fact, cap'n; but I don't know about cleanin' out ther place, hed they tarned up yer toes thar.

"But we'd a seen yer wasn't forgot in ther revenge reck'nin', I guess."

"Yas, them as hed called in yer chips, we w'u'd hev spotted," added Dick, the second cowboy.

"I thank you, boys; but my chips haven't been called in yet.

"Get us some dinner, Dick, and a good one, for I am as hungry as a grizzly; and you, Brick, tell me if you have seen any strange trails about here lately;" and Bill threw himself down on a bearskin before the cheerful fire in the cabin.

"Nary trail but thar were suthin' as went by this mornin' 'arly thet looked like a grizzly b'ar on horse-back.

"I tho't a cirkiss hed bu'st loose at first, fer he were covered with h'ar; but he kep' straight on, an', as I hedn't loss any sich indervidoal, I jist let him go, tho' I told Sam an' Dick they mout hev him."

"Thankee, Sam and Dick hadn't loss sich a animile nuther, an' so on he went, pushin' his horse like the devil were on him," said Sam.

"It was the Mad Giant Miner, and I am on his trail," said Bill, and he went on to tell his cowboys the story of his battle with the two sports.

A rest of a couple of hours, and, mounted upon a regular mountain horse, that could climb where a goat could, Bill set off once more on the trail of the madman, carrying with him a well-filled haversack of provisions.

Once more striking the trail, he followed it at a rapid canter, while Bricktop and his companions stood in front of the cabin watching him as far as they could see him, and registering bets regarding the success of his undertaking.

"I bets a hundred that he holds trumps clean through the game," said Bricktop.

His bet was taken by both cowboys, not from a doubt of Bill's lack of nerve, but because they were natural gamblers, and they took the chances.

CHAPTER CL.

THE COMBAT IN THE CAVERN.

To one who reads all signs pertaining to wood and prairie craft, it was as plain as an open book to him that the horse of the Mad Giant had been driven too hard.

The tracks swayed from side to side, and there were evidences of the animal having frequently stumbled.

At last the trail went upon a solid rock foundation, from which every vestige of snow had been blown by the fierce winds, and no tracks were visible.

Up the hillside, however, was a dark object that caught the eye of Buffalo Bill.

Hastening toward it, he discovered that it was the horse of the madman.

His brave heart had broken at last, and the noble animal lay dead on the trail, having fallen under the cruel driving of his mad rider.

But nowhere was the rider visible, and the rock foundation gave no sign of which course he had taken.

Night was coming on, and with it a threatening storm, and Bill was determined to find shelter.

If the storm was very severe, he would, the next morning, wend his way back to the ranch.

If it were not severe, he would press on into the heart of the mountains after the objects of his search, who were more important to be found, he thought, than the Mad Giant.

Should the latter secure another horse and make another dash into Poker Paradise, he would find men there to meet him, and a lucky shot might bring him down.

But with Amy Andrews it was different.

She was alone, and a young girl in the power of a man whom Buffalo Bill distrusted more and more.

She had been lured away for some purpose, he felt assured, and find her he would, if in the power of man to do so.

He had perfect confidence in his horse, in the severest strain, and he was anxious to continue on; but he must camp for the night, he knew, and he went toward a distant hill, where he expected to find some sheltered cañon.

As he came near the hill he saw a cañon opening, and to his delight found a large cavern in the rocky cliff.

It was now almost dark, and he lariatied his pony out in the cañon, where he would get good grazing, and carried his saddle and wraps into the cave to make himself comfortable.

He gathered some wood, and soon started a fire,

and then, to his surprise, saw that the cavern had had an occupant before him.

A freshly-killed bearskin was back in one corner, and there was a pile of logs, the embers of a fire, and quantities of game hanging up on the walls.

"The home of the Mad Giant, as I live!

"I am in luck,"

The discovery was one which most men would not have looked upon as a lucky one; but Bill was of a caliber that dared every danger.

With the utmost coolness, he opened his haversack to eat his supper, made a cup of coffee, and, having placed his revolver and knife by his side, where he could grasp them at a moment's notice, began upon his meal.

The light of the fire prevented his penetrating the darkness without, and he failed to see a huge form coming toward the cavern.

It was the Mad Giant, and he carried upon his shoulders a deer which he had slain.

His face was wild and haggard, his hair and beard unkempt, and his eyes deep sunken and savage.

His hands, face and clothing were stained red with blood, and he was certainly a most awe-inspiring being.

He stopped suddenly at detecting the firelight streaming out of the cavern, and glared with the ferocity of a savage beast into the cavern.

But he could not see the sheltered form of Buffalo Bill.

Down he threw his load, and drew a revolver.

But, with a fiendish smile, he replaced it, and jerked his long knife from his belt.

He felt its edge and point with malicious delight, unbuckled his belt, threw aside his bearskin coat and wolfskin cap, and crept toward the cavern.

Still Buffalo Bill ate on, unconscious of the approach of a demon.

That the man was mad there was no doubt, for the bullet of Buffalo Bill had plowed its way along the skull, and the shock had made him a maniac, though otherwise the wound would not have been dangerous.

Nearing the fire, he paused an instant.

But the crackling of the burning wood drowned his hoarse breathing.

At last, as he crept close against the side of the wall, he spied Buffalo Bill calmly eating his supper.

Mad though he was, he knew the man.

He recognized the one that had killed his pard and had wounded him, and then, with the bound of a panther, and a shriek such as a lost one might utter when hurled into perdition, he sprung clear over the fire and upon the invader of his mad retreat.

His great weight and the force of his mighty spring carried him right upon Buffalo Bill, who was knocked over by the blow.

But it carried him beyond the weapons he had so cautiously laid by his side for ready use, and he could only grasp the savage hand that held the knife, ere the keen blade was driven to his heart.

Though wholly taken by surprise, Buffalo Bill's superb pluck and iron nerve did not for a second desert him, for he had got a grip on the wrist of the madman, which the other could not shake off, and almost at the same instant drove his steely fist full into the savage face.

But the blow did not seem to hurt the giant, and with his disengaged hand he attempted to return it.

But there Buffalo Bill met him well, and warded off every stroke, as he was sciened in the pugilistic art.

Finding that his own blows, fearful as they were, made no impression upon the madman, Bill determined to get a clutch upon his throat.

The madman seemed to act not from his own ideas, but those of his foe, and at once, the example being set him, he, too, tried to grip the throat of the scout.

In the effort of each to escape the steely clutch of the other, the two men rolled over and over upon the rocky flooring of the cavern.

The strength of the giant was great, and madness but added to it; but Buffalo Bill was equally strong, and his slender form was more agile, and his movements as quick as lightning.

Over and over the cavern floor they fought, neither seeming to gain an advantage, other than a savage blow that Bill now and then got in, full in the face of his mad antagonist.

Once the madman seemed to hold the advantage, for in the roll across the cavern they stopped against the rocky wall, with the giant on top.

A shout of triumph burst from his lips; but it was short-lived, for, with a lightning movement and mighty effort, Buffalo Bill managed to seize the bushy hair of his enemy in his teeth, and close to the left side of his head.

The hair was too heavy and thick to give, even under the savage jerks the mad giant gave to tear it out by the roots, and, the example having been set him of using his teeth, he endeavored to fasten his teeth in the shoulder of Buffalo Bill, who, realizing that a bite from him would prove as terrible as from a mad dog, exerted an almost superhuman strength to master him and prevent his accomplishing his purpose.

The madman still grasped the knife in his hand, but the wrist was as though in a vise, and he had no power to use it; but Buffalo Bill, feeling that the end must soon come—for even he could not keep up that killing work much longer, watched his chance, and suddenly twisting the madman's wrist until the blade point was against the heart of his foe, put forth his entire strength, and having already braced one foot against the cavern wall, made a sudden turn.

Instantly, the position of the two men was reversed, and Buffalo Bill felt the grip of the madman relax, and knew that the knife had done its work.

The effort had rolled him again underneath the madman; but he quickly threw him off, and staggered to his feet.

The firelight revealed the huge giant, savage in death, and his hand still grasping the hilt of his own knife, which the sudden turn of Buffalo Bill had caused to pierce his heart.

It was a ghastly, sickening sight, and the scout turned away and walked toward the mouth of the cavern to cool his heated blood and rest after the terrible struggle he had gone through.

CHAPTER CLI.

IN THE CANON.

Miss Andrews had perfect confidence in the guiding of Old Bear Claws, in spite of the obstacles in his way, and had reined her horse back rather impatiently, as Wonder seemed rather more anxious to lead than be lead, so that he could find shelter from the tempest.

The jerk of the bit caused the horse to swerve a little, and instantly the bank of snow beneath his feet went down.

He felt himself going, and tried to bound to firm foundation, but it was useless, and down he went with the mass of snow.

Hardly able to realize that she was falling, Amy

uttered no cry, and, in fact, so rapid was the fall, she hardly understood what had happened until she found her downward flight was checked, and she was buried under tons of soft, flaky snow.

Her horse seemed unhurt, though momentarily dazed with surprise, and, having kept her saddle, she knew she had sustained no injury.

How far she had fallen she did not know, and, as all was darkness, she had no means of ascertaining.

For an instant Wonder seemed to be endeavoring to recover from his astonishment, and then he made efforts to cast off the weight of snow upon him.

Floundering violently for a while, he would then rest, and once more making an effort, aided by Amy with her arms, he at last succeeded in getting out of the snowbank, and stood panting with it only reaching a little above his knees.

As her eyes became accustomed to the surroundings, she saw rising above her a steep hill fully a hundred feet in height, and she knew that down the sloping side of this she had come on Wonder's back.

Had there not been such a heavy fall of snow, she knew that the death of herself and horse would have been instantaneous.

But, as it was, they had come down with a few tons, and found a drift of as many more to fall upon, which had saved her.

Raising her voice, she cried loudly for Old Bear Claws.

But only the howling of the storm answered her.

Then she gave herself up as lost, and was almost in utter despair.

She was shivering with cold, and her horse was trembling, too, and which way to go she did not know.

Alone, in the heart of a trackless mountain, with a fierce storm raging around her, and knowing of no succor, the wonder is that she did not go mad.

But hers was a brave heart, and she determined not to give up and to hope while life remained.

"Come, Wonder, we are in for it, and I yield myself to your instinct.

"Find us some sheltered nook from these cold winds, for I have matches, and we will have a fire to warm ourselves.

"Come, good horse, all depends upon you.

She dropped the reins upon the neck of the horse as she spoke, and, as though understanding her words, he moved forward at a brisk walk.

Eagerly she watched him, and was almost breathless with hope as she saw him stop after a while and sniff the air as though something unusual had come to his keen sense of smell.

"What is it, Wonder?"

"Perhaps it is Old Claws." And with that hope she called loudly.

But only the echo of her voice came back to her upon the howling storm.

Suddenly she checked a cry upon her lips, and said:

"It may be he scents danger, so I did wrong to call out.

"Go on, Wonder, if there is no danger."

Again the horse moved forward, and floundering through the snow for the distance of a mile, he suddenly gave a low whinny of delight.

Shading her eyes from the driving snow, Amy beheld a glimmer ahead.

Was it really a light?

Eagerly she peered ahead, and then she knew that she was not mistaken, for before her she distinctly saw a light.

Quickly she urged Wonder forward once more; but the intelligent horse needed little urging, and struggled on through the deep snow and drifts.

Was it Old Bear Claws?

Was it an Indian camp?

Such were the thoughts flashing through Amy's mind.

But soon the question was answered, as she came upon a hut right against an overhanging mountain.

The door of the hut was ajar, and through the opening came the light she had seen, and which was from a fire within.

It was a small hut, stoutly built, it seemed, and yet to her no palace could have been more welcome.

She hailed, and yet no one answered.

She called again, and again, and still no voice replied.

In amazement she glanced around her, and saw, not far away, another cabin.

Toward this she rode, but within it all was dark, and soon she discovered that the door of this hut was open, too.

Here Wonder wished to enter, and this told her it was a stable.

"You shall go in, good horse, and find a warm shelter, and I'll look somebody up about this place,

or I'll freeze," and she slipped to the ground, and turned Wonder loose.

Instantly he entered the cabin-stable, and Amy said firmly:

"I'll follow your example, and make myself at home."

She walked to the other cabin and glanced in through the open door.

A log fire blazed cheerily upon the large hearth, and her eyes, at a glance took in the contents of the little cabin.

A rustic cot, upon which was spread bear and buffalo skins, and a red blanket; a saddle hanging upon the wall, and a rifle and shotguns on brackets, with a belt of arms suspended by a peg; a bearskin chair, a table and a rude cupboard comprised the furniture.

But where was the occupant or occupants?

Nowhere visible, and in Amy walked, for she could no longer resist the temptation of drawing near the inviting fire.

Down in the bearskin chair she sank, and the ruddy glow, the cheerful heat, added to her fatigue, soon overcame her, and she dropped to sleep, to awake with a start to find crouching down within a few feet of her one of those terrors of the far Western mountains, even more to be dreaded than the grizzly bear—the mountain lion.

Its tail was wagging to and fro, its eyes were glaring upon her, and his attitude was crouching, as though ready for the fatal spring.

She tried to believe that she was asleep and was visited by a hideous nightmare.

But no, the savage brute was uttering a low growl, the white teeth were too real, and, unable to stand the fearful strain, upon her nerves, she fainted.

When Amy Andrews returned to consciousness she still sat in the bearskin chair before the fire.

She rubbed her eyes to see if she was awake, and then looked around again at what she believed was an apparition.

Upon a stool at one side of the hearth sat a human being.

She was between two fires—the lion and the Indian—and she would have almost preferred death by the real fire in front of her than at the hands of the one or the teeth of the other.

She shook herself and sat up, and the lion growled.

At this, the Indian spoke sharply and the animal laid down, content to let him manage matters.

The savage then attracted the attention of Amy more particularly.

He was a man of large size, well along in years, and had about as much mercy in his face as the brute opposite him possessed.

He was decked out most gayly in feathers, beads, fringed buckskin leggings and hunting shirt, and innumerable brass rings, and a necklace of beads of all colors.

This fact Amy particularly noticed, and, a good reader of human nature, even under a red complexion, she at once decided that, Indian, old and ugly though he was, he was a dandy, egotistical, arrogant, vain and selfish.

His other faults she feared she would too soon discover also. He glanced at her as she revived, scolded the lion, and relapsed into the enjoyment of his pipe.

No surprise was manifested at her being there, no questions as to when she came, where from, how long she expected to stay, or if she liked the country.

With a steady look at his face, which amounted to a stare, Amy read that red man of the mountain, and, without a word, she calmly took off her watch and chain and handed it to him.

He took it pretty much as a cat might pounce upon a mouse, and gave a gratified:

"Ugh?"

What U-g-h meant she had no means of knowing, so she watched the untutored savage take her chain, tie one end of it in the ring of the watch, and hang it around his neck like a locket.

That he was a shade happier than he was before receiving the costly gift was evident, and Amy began to calculate just how happy it was in her power to make him.

She had a belt of gold with her, but wished to hold that in reserve, so she took off a ruby ring and handed it to him.

It would not go on the tip of his little finger—and he hung it on the chain, and fastened his eye on a diamond she wore.

Of course, it was handed to him, and brought forth another:

"Ugh!"

"I've risked three hundred dollars on the old sav-

age now, and I'll see if he can talk," muttered Amy, and she opened with:

"You great chief, aren't you?"

"Yes, Snake-with-Wings great chief," was the guttural response.

"I thought so; most big chiefs are great chiefs," returned Amy, and she added:

"Snake-with-Wings fine name."

"Yes."

"Been here long?"

"Long time."

"Live here, don't you?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. Any family to speak of excepting that savage brute?" and she glanced at the lion.

"Ugh."

Here Amy was at sea again.

"Is that beast tame?"

"Good."

"He don't look it."

"Yes."

"Then he does, for I agree with Snake-with-Wings in everything."

"Ugh!"

"That's what I want to know, what is ugh?"

"Ugh!"

"That's what I thought. Are you a Sioux?"

"Cheyenne! Sioux heap bad Injuns."

"So I think. I like Cheyennes."

Snake-with-Wings seemed pleased at this, for he grinned; but as the relaxation of the muscles of his face seemed to give him pain, Amy was determined not to say anything to provoke another smile.

"All alone?" she asked.

"Have lion."

"I'd rather be alone," said Amy, with a shudder.

"Bad storm," and she pointed out of the door, which was now closed.

"Ugh."

"I am cold and hungry. Will Snake-with-Wings give me something to eat and let me stay here?" she asked, determined by a desperate effort to make herself at home.

"Yes."

"My horse is in the other cabin."

"Yes."

"I'll cook my supper, if you'll only tell me where to find it."

The Indian arose and walked to the cupboard;

but, as he put his hand on it, there came a loud hail without.

The lion sprung to his feet with a savage growl, and the Indian cried:

"It is paleface chief. Him talk to white squaw."

With this he left the cabin, followed by the mountain lion, and poor Amy sat wondering if the newcomer was on a par with the two occupants of the cabin she had become acquainted with.

"He may be worse, and, if so, may Heaven have mercy upon me," she murmured.

The next instant the door was flung open, and the one whom Snake-with-Wings had called the paleface chief stepped across the threshold of the cabin, and, at sight of him, Amy sprung to her feet with a surprised cry upon her lips.

CHAPTER CLII.

HIS DOOM.

The chief, whose sudden arrival in the midst of the storm had been announced to Amy Andrews by the Indian Snake-with-Wings, and whose coming had brought from her lips a cry of surprise, was none other than Old Bear Claws, the trapper.

That lone hut in the cañon was his principal retreat in those wild mountains, and his housekeepers were the Indian and the lion.

He had other cabins scattered here and there, in the most inaccessible places.

The other cabins of Old Bear Claws were merely temporary abiding-places, scattered here and there; but the one in which Amy found herself was his home.

True to his instincts in prairie and mountain craft, he had been heading for the cabin, in spite of his occasional getting off the trail in the storm, and, unable to find Amy, and, feeling that she had been dashed down the cliff to her death, he had continued on his way, reached the pass at the head of the deep cañon and arrived after she did.

"Well, this is a glad surprise!" she said.

"Yas, it are a gladder one ter me, fer I thought sartin yer were dead, when yer went over thet cliff, an' it can't be did ag'in an' not kill yer, an' so I comed on ter my leetle ranch, detarmined ter dig yer out o' ther snow ter-morrer and give yer decent burryin'.

"But you tuk ther short cut an' beat heur, durned ef yer didn't."

"So it seems, and I found this warm fire most welcome."

"Yas, I guess yer found ther fire more warmer in welcomin' yer then thet Injun an' panther, fer they is surly brutes, both of 'em, but they suits me.

"I saved thet Injun from gittin' burnt at ther stake some years ago, an' he hev freezed ter me ever since, an' ther lion I r'ized from a purp, an' I guesses, 'cept-in' my horse, them is all that loves Old Bear Claws."

"You must certainly count me as one of your friends."

"Waal, we'll see.

"Now, I'll jist rummage round an' make this shanty comfortable fer yer ter-night, an' ther Injun, ther panther an' me will go ter other lodgin's; but I'll be on hand for breakfast with yer."

Utterly worn out, with the feeling of shelter and warmth, Amy sunk into a deep sleep, from which she was awakened by Old Bear Claws calling to her that it was time for breakfast.

She dressed herself hurriedly, glanced out, and saw that the storm had cleared away, and the sun was shining.

A good breakfast awaited her, and she had no cause to complain of Snake-with-Wings as a cook, whatever his other faults might be, and she ate heartily.

"Now, jist come with me, leddy, an' I'll give yer a surprise party," said the old hunter.

To her surprise, he caught hold of the cupboard against the back of the cabin, and it swung out like a door, revealing a cavern behind it.

Taking a pine knot and lighting it, he led her through this cave, which grew larger as they went along, and she started with horror, to suddenly come upon an arched chamber of rock, and behold before her, lying upon a cot, and chained to the wall, a man with haggard face, emaciated form and gray hair and beard.

But in spite of the surroundings, the appearance of the poor wretch, and the story told her that he was dead, Amy Andrews recognized the father she had not seen for years.

"Great God! you here, my poor, dear father," and she sprung to his side.

"My child! my child! you have come to save me," was all the poor man could utter, and the two were clasped in each other's arms.

Suddenly, they were recalled to themselves by a stern voice saying:

"Well, now, that I have you both in my power, I guess I can bring you to terms, Anson Andrews."

They turned toward the speaker. It was Old Bear Claws.

He stood a few paces apart, gazing upon them with a strange expression upon his face.

The man was crouching down against the wall of the cave, to which his irons were attached, and seemed a wreck of manhood.

He gazed upon his beautiful daughter, and clung to her hand tremblingly, as though he feared to lose her.

She looked upon Old Bear Claws with an expression of intense surprise.

Not for a moment before had a shadow of doubt of the guide found a place in her heart.

Now, when she saw her father in irons, and heard the remark of the man whose retreat she knew it was, she gasped:

"What do you mean?"

"I will tell you what I mean, Miss Amy Andrews, and the story is soon told."

Old Bear Claws had suddenly dropped his dialect, and drawing himself up to his full height, confronted the father and daughter.

"An explanation of your words and conduct are necessary, and both my poor father and myself will listen to what you have to say," said Amy, haughtily.

"You assume a tone, my lady, by no means in keeping with your position at present," replied Old Bear Claws.

"Ah! I see, you are as treacherous as a snake, and have gotten me into your power, you think."

"I know it."

"We shall see, sir; but who are you?"

"Old Bear Claws, the hunter."

"No; that is evidently a name you are dodging justice under."

"I ask who you are, and why you have suddenly turned against me, as your words and manner indicate?"

"Let me explain."

"That man, your father, is my lifelong enemy."

"Then you are the one that has placed him here in irons?"

"I am."

"How has he wronged you?"

"Basely."

"You know you speak falsely, for I have done you no wrong," said the chained man.

"It was no wrong to defraud me of my fortune, Anson Andrews?"

"I did not defraud you of it, for your conduct turned your father's heart against you, and he willed it to me."

"I was wild, I admit, and extravagant."

"You were slowgoing, and your quiet ways made you a favorite with my father."

"I needed money, Anson Andrews, and though you were the cashier, and could have let me have it, you refused."

"I had loaned you all I could spare you from my own savings."

"Curse your savings! I wanted more than you could save in years, and you refused me."

"I did my duty to my uncle, whose cashier I was."

"And I, his son, you would not help out of a scrape."

"I could not."

"So you said; well, Miss Amy Andrews, let me tell you that I had a debt to pay, and if it was not promptly paid, it would have been discovered that I had committed a forgery."

"A forgery?"

"Oh, yes; I don't mind telling you now. But I was driven to it."

"As your father refused me the money I needed, I determined to take it from the safe."

"I watched him open the safe several times, and discovered the combination lock."

"That night I went into the office with a false key, opened the safe, and got out a roll of bills."

"Your father and my father were returning home together from a lecture, and saw me go up the alley to the back door."

"My father went after an officer, while that man, Anson Andrews, followed me."

"He found the door unlocked and came in, and met me coming out of the office."

"He sprung upon me, not knowing me—for I was disguised—and, when I saw he was going to get the best of me, as an act of self-preservation, I drove a knife into his side."

"At the door I was caught by the officer and my father, who recognized me."

"Go! go with what you have stolen, and never darken my door again or call yourself my son."

"Such were the words of my father to me, and, taking him at his word, I departed, for he bribed the officer to let me go.

"Since that day I never saw my father, for he died some years after, but your father, as you see, I have met since," and the man smiled in a sinister, sneering way that caused Amy to shudder.

But her father, with bowed head, neither moved nor showed signs of having heard the man's recital of his acts of guilt.

"Are you interested sufficiently in my confession and explanation of why you find your father here in chains, to wish to hear more?" asked Old Bear Claws.

"Yes."

"Well, the wound I gave your father that night well-nigh proved fatal; but he had a hardy constitution and survived it.

"I came West and went into the cattle business in a pleasant valley a hundred miles or so from here, and I would have succeeded well but for some little acts I committed that rendered me an object of attention from the Vigilantes.

"Of those irregularities, according to law, I need not speak, as they do not concern you.

"But, while I was drifting about the border as adventurer, guide, trapper, and lastly as a renegade, your father was playing his cards so well that my father left him his fortune.

"I was cut off with just enough to bury me, and my cousin got the riches that should have been mine.

"You are aware that in some way he swamped himself, and, rather than see his wife and child live in poverty, he came West to dig gold out of the mines.

"By a strange accident I managed to save his life, and he was drawn toward me by the warmest gratitude, though, under my border name, he did not know me—and, in fact, the many years that had passed since we met had changed me from the ruddy-faced youth of eighteen, which I was then, to the man of forty with long hair and beard.

"But I knew him at a glance.

"Well, we stuck together, and went as pards out here.

"He already had dug out considerable gold, but my luck was not equal.

"Perhaps I was too lazy.

"Business called me away for a few weeks, and, in my absence, your father had made a big find, and, with all his diggings, intended to go soon to the nearest station, and return for his gold with wagons and a guard.

"In my absence he had hidden it somewhere, and where he would not tell me, as some miners had given him cause to doubt me.

"I told him I would help him, and he said no, and offered me a thousand, as my luck had been so bad.

"His thousand I did not want, but his thousands I did, and I determined to possess all.

"He started for the nearest station alone; but I had already laid my plans, and, with an Indian comrade, I waylaid him on the road, and threatened him with death if he would not tell me the secret of where he had buried his gold.

"This he refused to do, and I brought him here, and here he has been ever since, and will remain until he tells the secret to me, for that gold I am determined to have."

"I do not doubt it.

"You are, then, his comrade, of whom he wrote such kind letters?" said Amy.

"Yes."

"You are Harry Hammond, who came to my mother and myself with the story of my father's death?"

"Yes."

"What motive had you for coming to see us?"

"I knew he had sent considerable money to you, and I wished to see just how much?"

"And yet you brought us gold?"

"A little, which I said had been left by your father.

"That was a blind, simply to make myself solid, you know."

"Well, sir, you found out we were not rich?"

"I found out that I loved my sweet cousin Amy, in my way, and I wanted to marry you.

"Had I succeeded, I would have returned here, told your father you were my wife, and given him his liberty, in case he should swear by the most sacred oaths that he would not betray me.

"Then, I would see that he made his will in your favor, and his death would have been a matter of very short time after that."

"Oh, you villain!" cried Amy, with intense indignation.

"I know it, sweet cousin; but my cloven foot was revealed to you, and I spoiled my prospects, so returned West, to try and force from your father where his gold was hidden.

"This he refused to do, saying he would rather die, and you see he is dying on account of his stubbornness."

"If he dies he shall be fearfully avenged," said Amy, with savage earnestness.

"You are in no position to threaten."

"We shall see."

"Yes, we shall see, sweet cousin.

"It was a lucky day when I found you had arrived at Poker Paradise, and I was at once determined to get possession of you."

"And you have succeeded."

"Certainly. I play to win, and hold as many trump cards as that terrible fellow, Buffalo Bill."

"You'll find that Buffalo Bill will win the game when it comes to a play of life and death between you."

"I'll risk it, for Satan takes care of his own, and I can find no fault with him for not caring for me."

"Well, sir, what is your intention now with regard to my poor father and myself?" and Amy glanced straight into the face of the man before her.

"To get your father's gold, and make you Mrs. Henry Hammond," was the unblushing remark of the man, as he drew from his head a most cleverly-made wig and beard, revealing his countenance as it really was.

CHAPTER CLIII.

THE TERMS FOR LIFE.

For the moment after his terrible threat of what was his diabolical intention, Amy Andrews stood like a statue gazing upon the dark, handsome, but sinister and cruel face of the man before her.

Her father had seemed to awaken from his lethargy, and half rose to his feet, to sink again upon his bearskin rug, with a groan that seemed to come from his inmost being.

"You dare make such an assertion to me, sir?" at last said Amy, with trembling voice and flashing eyes.

"Why not?"

"You ask why not?"

"Yes."

"I marry such as you are?" and her scorn was fearful.

"You certainly shall."

"Never!"

"You forget you are in my power."

"Oh, no! I could not forget that, with your devilish face confronting me."

"Here! be warned not to insult, or you may rue your words."

"You will not harm me."

"You need not be too certain."

"Why, you said you loved me."

"I do."

"God help such love!"

"It is true love, and I would make you my wife, and become a changed man, led by your influence, for I would have gold, and it is the desire for riches that makes me the wicked man I am."

"You know your wickedness, then?"

"Of course, and do not deny it, so I woo you under no false pretenses."

"You have kept my poor father here a chained prisoner, trying to wring the secret of where he had hidden his gold from him, and yet he has had the

nerve to remain firm to thwart you, and I am his child, so you need not think I will yield."

"I will kill him if he does not tell."

"Oh, no."

"I say I will."

"And I say oh, no."

"You shall see."

"No; you are cowardly enough, I admit, but then you bury the secret with him, and thus thwart yourself."

"I mean I shall yet have his gold, and make you my wife."

"And I mean that you shall neither get the gold nor marry me."

"Amen!"

The word was spoken in a deep voice, and it was the chained prisoner who uttered it.

"Well, I'll tell you my terms."

"The terms of an ardent villain."

"Be careful."

"A murderer, a renegade, ay, and all that is bad."

"You had better be warned, Amy Andrews, or you'll regret it."

"I can regret nothing so much as having known you."

"You shall know me better."

"Your terms, please, villain, and then leave us."

"Well, the fortune and your hand in marriage."

"Never!"

"I say yes, for then I will set your father at liberty, and we will seek other lands and live in happiness."

"Never!"

"Think."

"No, I will not think."

"Then, here you both remain and die," he said, savagely.

"So be it, we will die."

"Well, you know my terms, and if you agree to them, just come to the cabin and rap, and I will hear you."

"I shall bring you a cot and make you as comfortable as I can; but through the cabin is the only means of egress from this cabin, and you see escape is impossible."

"Yonder light streams through crevices, so you will have air, and not be in the dark, and the Indian will give you food regularly."

"Now, I leave you to think over my terms."

The next moment he was gone, and Amy Andrews was alone with her father, whom she had so strangely found, and found a mere wreck of his former self.

"Oh, father! what have we done that all this sorrow should come upon us?"

The cry came from poor Amy when the presence of the man, known as Old Bear Claws, no longer prevented her from an exhibition of her feelings.

For an instant she seemed utterly crushed under the blow, and her brave nature yielded to weakness.

But, when she gazed upon the tortured face of her father, and saw that in his weak state he, too, was about to yield, after the long time of resolute defiance he had maintained, she at once controlled her emotion.

She saw that the strong man would break down now, and now was when both needed all their strength, for not for a moment did the maiden think of yielding to the demand of the villain who had brought so much sorrow upon them.

"Amy, my child, we are but reeds in his hands.

"I will confess the secret of where my treasure is buried, and let him have all, if only he will allow you and me to go in peace.

"We will be poor, but I will work again for your support, my noble child.

"Call him, Amy, and tell him I will confess and that he shall have the gold."

The appearance of the man was pitiable as he spoke; but the same resolute will that had upheld him through starvation, imprisonment, and the iron chains eating into his flesh, now shone forth in the face of his daughter.

"No, father, not one dollar shall he have, and he shall never make me his wife."

"But, my child——"

"Father, for years you have held out against that devil in human shape, and now that I am with you, you can recuperate, and I will not mind the imprisonment.

"I am young and strong, and have a spirit not readily broken.

"He will not iron me, for he thinks a woman can do nothing to escape from his power.

"But he shall see, so cheer up, my dear father, and we will see what can be done."

Her firm resolve gave renewed life to him, and the two sat down for an earnest talk together.

Then she made inquiries of all he knew about the cavern, and asked regarding there being no outlet, except through the cabin.

"Amy!" suddenly cried the imprisoned man, eagerly.

"There must be, there is, another outlet, and I will tell you why I think, or rather know, so.

"One day that villainous panther was left to watch me, when the Indian left the cabin, and, getting tired of his work, I saw him go off to the left of yonder bend, and in an hour's time he returned with a large mountain rabbit in his mouth, which he laid down there and ate."

"Then there is an opening?" eagerly asked Amy.

"Yes, for that rabbit either came in, or the panther went out and caught it."

"Oh! if I could but find it; but then it might be too small for us to get out."

"No; for one night I was awakened by a growl,

and saw two bright objects over there against the wall, looking at me.

"The fire had burned low, and at first I thought it was the lion; but then another growl came, and I felt sure it was a wild animal.

"I reached over and stirred up the embers, and distinctly saw the savage beast run away, and it was, I think, a bear."

"That settles the question of an outlet, father.

"But did you tell that man, or the Indian, about your seeing the animal?"

"No, though I felt it would be safer to do so, as some night it might return and spring upon me in sleep.

"I asked for some wood at night to keep the fire burning, but they immediately deprived me of all they had before allowed me, and nightly I have been in fear of being torn in pieces by wild beasts."

"Oh! what have you not suffered, my poor father?"

"Untold agonies, my child, and I believe I should have gone mad, but for your timely coming.

"But see, I tried to file my chain in two, by rubbing those links against the rocks.

"See!"

He held forth the chains, near where they were driven in the rocks, and showed that two links had been worn very thin.

"This would necessitate your carrying the weight of three feet on either wrist, father.

"I should have thought you would have tried to free the manacles on your wrists."

"Oh, no! they are daily inspected by the Indian, and it would have been seen that I was tampering with them.

"That is the right place, and they would act as dangerous weapons, in case I had been attacked.

"But my strength gave out, and I could do no more, and had almost given myself up to die.

"Yet I should have died with the secret burial-place of my treasure untold, for that man should never have had it."

"Well, father, cheer up now, and ere long I feel that all will be well.

"We will fight fate to the bitter end, and triumph at last.

"As soon as night comes on, and we are left alone, I shall inspect this cavern thoroughly, for I have a couple of boxes of matches in my pocket, which I fortunately forgot to put in my satchel at our last halting-place, and merely discovered as I was about to mount.

"Cheer up, father, for I see light ahead, and we will yet outwit that man, and then——"

She paused, and her father asked:

"What were you about to say, my child?"

"Then we will find out just how sweet revenge is," and her voice was cold and bitter as she spoke, for

the plight of her father made her indeed most revengeful.

A moment after the poor man asked:

"And how is it, my child, that you are here in these wilds?"

"Father, that man, Henry Hammond, came to mother and myself and told us that you were dead, and gave us that gold.

"We believed him, and he was kind to us, until one day he asked me to marry him and I refused, when he became abusive, and made threats terrible to hear, after which he left, going we knew not where.

"One night mother awoke after a strange dream and she told me that she had seen you, and that you had said that she was not to believe Henry Hammond's story, for you were alive and a prisoner in a mountain camp.

"That dream took such possession of me that I at last decided to know the truth, and I started for these wilds and I determined to go to every camp, follow every trail until I found you.

"On my way to Poker Paradise I met the great scout, Buffalo Bill, then driving the Overland coach, as he told me, to try and locate the haunts of road agents and their strength."

"I know him well by name, my child, and he is a wonderful man."

"Well, a road-agent spy was in the coach with me, as a passenger, and but for Buffalo Bill he would have robbed me.

"But Buffalo Bill saved me and my money and jewels, for I brought the latter to sell if I should be robbed.

"And more, Buffalo Bill knows my story, for he is a noble man and one to trust, and he will soon be on my trail, never fear, and he will rescue us."

"If man can do so, he is that man," was the prisoner's reply.

CHAPTER CLIV.

BUFFALO BILL'S BEST TRAIL.

It took Buffalo Bill quite a while to rally after his long and terrific struggle with the madman in the cavern, where he had sought shelter from the storm.

But, though feeling sore and tired, he at last became assured that he was himself again, and he set to work to bury the body of the dead giant under the stones he found in plenty in the cavern.

This humane duty attended to, and with a regret that the madman had forced him to kill him, he sought rest for the balance of the night.

Having rested well, he awoke feeling very comfortable, and found that the storm was over.

After breakfast he mounted his horse and continued further into the mountains, hoping to strike the trail of Old Bear Claws and the young girl he had deceived into trusting him.

What the man's motive could be, Buffalo Bill could not understand, unless it was to hide her away in his retreat and there force a large payment from her for her freedom.

"I never liked the old fellow, and there have been some dark stories told about him.

"Dave should never have allowed the girl to go with him, and if harm comes to her, I'll drive him out of this country," said Buffalo Bill, as he pushed on his way into the mountain fastnesses, where few men dared to go.

He had started upon the trail of Old Bear Claws, when he had left Poker Paradise with Amy, the night that Trailer Tom had been killed, and the snow having wiped out all tracks, he had to depend upon his cleverness as a borderman to follow those he sought by signs alone, signs of the way he believed the old trapper would take, with a young girl's comfort to be looked after.

His wonderful manner of reading the signs about him gave him an idea of the course which they must have taken.

But, getting farther into the mountains, he was at a loss to know which way they could have gone.

Could he not find the retreat, which he felt confident could not be very many miles away, after a few days' search, it was his intention to go to the village of a friendly Indian chief, and get a hundred of his best warriors, and then he knew success would be certain.

For two days he searched alone, not wishing to call on the Indians if he could help it, and not desiring to lose the time it would take to go to their village and back, for the mountains were not wholly free from snow, and the traveling was dangerous and bad.

At the end of the third day he was about to start for the village, and give up further search alone, when, hanging from a small tree, just in front of his face, he saw an object fluttering.

Riding forward he saw that it was a lady's veil.

The wind had whipped it out, and the veil was badly torn; but still it held firmly upon the branch, which had evidently caught it as Amy rode beneath, and drawn it from her head, for he did not doubt but that it was hers.

After looking at it carefully he came to several theories that were correct:

It had been days on that branch.

It had been torn from her head while she was passing beneath on horseback.

The manner in which it was caught on the branch showed that she was going to the north.

It was taken off at night, or she would have returned and taken it.

It was torn off in the midst of the snowstorm that had followed her departure from Poker Paradise, or she would have, at any rate, turned and searched for

it; but, as she did not, she was doubtless urged on by Old Bear Claws to hastily seek some shelter.

Old Bear Claws was too good a borderman to look for temporary shelter in that snowstorm, or to have pressed on, without a definite point in view, and therefore the retreat could not be far away.

The steepness of the mountain path, on which the veil was found, had before prevented Buffalo Bill from thinking Old Bear Claws had led Amy by that rough trail.

But now there could be no doubt which way they had gone, and on Buffalo Bill went until night caused him to camp.

With the first streak of day he was again in the saddle, and had gone but a short distance when he came to a ridge that overlooked a deep cañon.

Down in the gorge, and at its end, curling up above the treetops, he saw a thin wreath of smoke.

"By Heaven! I have found them!"

The cry broke from his lips in ringing tones, and taking the nature of the country in at a glance, he saw the best way to reach the cabin, from whence he knew the smoke must come.

But hardly had he entered the wild valley when he came upon a startling scene.

Before him, not a hundred yards away, were the cabins of the old trapper.

Before them were four human beings and the savage brute the trapper had so well trained.

These were Amy Andrews upon her knees and with hands clasped, as she looked pleadingly toward Old Bear Claws.

Her father was bound to a pine tree, but no longer chained, and, standing in front of him was the Indian, Snake-with-Wings, holding in check the savage beast from attacking Anson Andrews.

The scene was a terrible one, and Buffalo Bill read its purport at a glance, even had he not heard the words of Old Bear Claws:

"Your father must give up his gold and you become my wife, or I'll tell the Indian to release that savage brute to tear him to pieces."

The revengeful old renegade was so taken up with his devilish plot that he did not hear or see the approach of Buffalo Bill.

Quick as a flash Buffalo Bill raised his rifle, and his first shot was to kill the mountain lion.

Hardly had the brute dropped dead when a second shot from the scout crashed through the brain of the equally savage Indian, while, springing forward, a revolver in hand now, Buffalo Bill shouted:

"Up with your hands, you old Satan, or I fire!"

Old Bear Claws was fairly caught, his Indian pard and the lion lying dead near him, and the scout holding him under cover.

But he saw that Amy Andrews was in a line with him, and he took the chance of a shot to spring back-

ward and seize her, holding her as a shield before him with one hand, while with the other he grasped his revolver.

But he had not counted upon the perfect confidence of Buffalo Bill in his deadly aim, and the lightning rapidity with which the scout could aim and fire.

Though he saw his half of the man's head, as he leaned over the form of Amy to see to fire at his foe, Buffalo Bill drew trigger and his bullet buried itself between the eyes of the vindictive renegade.

As he fell, Amy sprung from his limp grasp and cried:

"Buffalo Bill, I knew that you would save us!"

Explanations quickly followed, and Amy told how Old Bear Claws had discovered them attempting to escape, and they had bound her father to a tree and really would have released the brute to tear him to pieces did she not yield to his demands—that she should become his wife.

"Well, they were a dangerous trio, and the country is better without them.

"Mr. Andrews, you can ride that old devil's horse, Miss Amy has her own, and to-morrow we will start for Poker Paradise, for this is too near the Sioux village to be safe."

So it was decided, and Mr. Andrews said that he could readily make the journey, so the start was made, the bodies being left in the cabin by the scout.

The next night's halt was made at Buffalo Bill's ranch, and, learning that the mad miner had been killed, Bricktop told his companions to pay their bets, which they did.

The following night the party arrived in Poker Paradise, and Amy was given her room, and her father placed near her, while Buffalo Bill said:

"Dave, you may or may not have known what that old trapper really was, but I'll give you the benefit of the doubt and thus save your neck; but I came on the stage trail to make certain discoveries, and I happen to know that you posted the road agents as to passengers who had money, and only because you were good to the soldiers do I spare you; but my advice to you is to sell out your tavern and other claims here, and leave this country before you get a rope about your neck."

"I'll do it quick, Bill, and thank you for the advice," was the answer.

A few weeks after, Mr. Andrews and his daughter took the eastbound coach, and with it went his fortune in gold which had so nearly cost him his life, while Buffalo Bill went along as an escort and saw them well through the land of danger, when he again returned to his perilous duties upon the far frontier—duties and deeds that won for him the title of the Bravest of the Brave.

TO BE CONTINUED.

PRIZE ANECDOTE DEPARTMENT.

Boys, look on page 31 and see the announcement of the new contest. We propose to make this contest the most successful and far-reaching ever conducted. It rests with you to do it, but we know that you can, because the first contest along the same lines has been a tremendous success.

Here are some of the best articles received this week:

My Narrow Escape.

(By Walter Emerson, Bangor, Maine.)

One day when I had been out to my uncle's, about five miles out into the country, on my bicycle I had quite an experience. I was coasting down a steep hill when my wheel struck a stick or some other obstruction lying in the road. I landed in a very unceremonious manner beside the road. The front wheel of my bicycle was a wreck. It was so completely sprung out of shape that I could not possibly ride it. I took it into a house near by and started home afoot. A man overtook me in a team, and I asked him for a ride. He told me to jump in, which I did.

We had not gone far when I discovered that my companion was badly intoxicated. The team was going at a rattling pace and I dared not jump out. So I held on to the seat and kept still.

Soon we came to a railroad crossing. I heard the roaring of a train. Realizing our danger, I grabbed the man's arm and told him to hurry up. By this time the train was in sight coming round a turn. The man lost what little presence of mind he had and stopped square on the track! Happily for us, I did not lose my head. Grabbing the whip from the man's nerveless hand, I struck the horse a sharp blow.

On rushed the iron monster, but, thank Heaven! we were safe. One second later and—

Well, this story would never have been written!

An Adventure With a Jersey Bull.

(By Ben. J. Friley, Catlettsburg, Ky.)

I work for a man who is very fond of fine cattle, and about two years ago he bought a bull which I took charge of, thinking to have lots of fun with him. I was very proud of him. The owner told me to be very careful, as he might be dangerous, but I told him there was no danger. Winter passed away and summer came, so we put him in pasture, and as there wasn't much grass I would take him out some corn every day. One day as I was going to feed him I noticed that some boy had been teasing him, and he was very mad, and was bellowing, but when he saw me he quieted down, so it seemed, and I put his corn down on the ground and he began to eat as usual. So I went over across a little stream that was near by to get some apples which I saw on a tree, and after I had gotten all the apples I wanted I started back, and I noticed he was through eating and was walking around the fence, but I thought that nothing strange. So I walked on with my head down and my thoughts on something else, when all at once I heard a loud roar which shook the very ground beneath my feet, and as I raised my head I saw the bull charging right down upon me with the speed of a race horse. He was all worked up, with his tail standing straight in the air. He was the most frightful and dangerous-looking creature I ever saw. Well, I was just in the center of the field, so there was no chance of getting to the fence, and I knew it would be sure death to run, so I stood right still.

On came the bull. He was now about fifty feet from me and I was almost paralyzed with fear. Just at that moment I thought of a revolver which I had in my pocket. It was a .38 Colts. Quick as a flash, I drew it and leveled it at the bull's head and fired. As the pistol cracked he bounded high in the air and fell to the ground, and I made a break for the fence,

but I hadn't gone half way before the bull was up and after me again, but he was not going so fast, so I reached the fence and got over and waited for him to come up, but as he came I saw that the bullet had struck just at the root of the horn, which accounted for it not killing him.

Fearing that he might break out and give me further trouble, I laid my pistol on the fence and took deliberate aim and fired. The bull sank down like a log, with a bullet in his brain, and that was the last of my gentle bull.

I hastened off to settle with the owner. I call that a narrow escape.

My Adventure With a Bear.

(By Price S. B. Rockwell, West Leisenning, Pa.)

There had been a large fire in the interior and it drove the game down this way. My father liked to hunt very much, so he got my uncle and cousin to go with him and me on a hunting trip for wild turkeys.

We got up about four o'clock in the morning and started off.

We got back to where we thought the turkeys were. My father acted as leader of the expedition. He told my cousin to go along the top of the ridge on the left and my uncle along the creek, he would go along the top on the opposite side, and I was to go along the side of the ridge.

We swung around that way, keeping about 300 yards apart, but I, being young and restive, got away ahead of the others.

I had sat down on a log to wait for them to come up, when I heard a growl behind me. I jumped to my feet and, to my horror and fright, I saw a half-grown black bear. My first thought was to run, but I did not. I jumped behind a tree. When the bear got over the log I had been sitting on he stopped and growled. Then I gave him a load of No. 6 shot, which knocked him down.

I thought I had killed him, but I had just stunned him. He got hold of my leg and kept pulling me a little bit at a time. I could not use my gun, for I had let it fall when he grabbed me.

I hollered for help till I was hoarse. My father was not very far away, but I thought it was hours before he got to me.

When he was within twenty yards of me he shot the bear through the head, which laid him out. This was my first adventure with a bear, and I hope it will be my last.

Caught in the Current.

(By Herman R. Heis, New York City.)

One very hot Sunday afternoon last summer after eating my dinner I decided to go down for a swim in the East River at the foot of Forty-fourth street. While I was getting ready one of the boys named Frank Mestry challenged me, saying he would dare me to swim over to the rocks, a little past the middle of the river. I told him I would not take any bluffs, and we started off. He was a little ahead of me all the way when suddenly I noticed I could not move my legs. I also noticed that my tights were very tight. I just happened to be in the tide and was being swiftly carried down with it. I said to myself that it would probably be my last swim. I was thinking that any minute I would go down, when suddenly I turned over on my back and floated. I tried several times to get out of the tide but failed. I made up my mind to try for the last

time and with a desperate effort I succeeded. When I was safe on some logs I found myself at the foot of Thirty-second street. I could not get back without my clothes, and I sat down for some time. After a while I decided to swim past the Thirty-fourth street ferry and then walk the docks the rest of the way. When I got back my friend was surprised to see me as he thought I was drowned.

My Rescue From a Watery Grave.

(By W. W. Wetmore, Port Washington, N. Y.)

About three years ago three boys, James and Harold McKee and William Wetmore, the writer, were learning to swim. This is the way we learned. We each took a board and laid on it on our stomachs. Then we would strike out just as you do when swimming. The board, of course, supported us just like a life preserver.

Well, one day one of us made the motion that we roll off our boards all of a sudden and attempt to swim alone.

Well, when we got in deep water all of us seemed afraid to do as we said we would, until finally I (who always considered myself brave, but found I was not) thought I would roll off, so off I went. But swimming was not so easy. I struck out, but it was useless. I sank and rose, not expecting help from my comrades as I knew they could not swim any better than I could, and that was not at all.

But when I rose the second time I saw coming toward me, on his board, Jimmie.

Well, what do you think? He jumped off his board, never for a moment thinking of his own danger. He made a brave attempt to swim, but found he could not, so he grabbed hold of his board (which happened by luck to be near) with his left hand and with his other hand grabbed me. He then kept his own head and mine both above water, until finally help came. We were both rescued in a half-unconscious condition.

Thrown By a Broncho.

(By Ralph Diggins, Harvard, Ill.)

I have read every number of the Buffalo Bill stories and think them very interesting. I have had a few narrow escapes, but the one I think the most interesting happened about two years ago, when I tried to ride a broncho.

One afternoon after school a friend asked me to come up to his house to see his new Western broncho which his father had got with a carload of horses.

When we arrived at his house he showed me the nervous little buckner, who was prancing around in a large stall. He got his bridle and saddle and put them on his pony. He then jumped on and rode around a block, and then asked me to ride around.

As I have lived on a farm and have ridden horses ever since I was a little boy, I got on and started around the block. When I tried to turn the corner the horse, instead of turning, kept straight ahead down a hill. I gave him a jerk and he threw up his head and started down the hill on the dead run. When about half way down the hill he stumbled and fell, throwing me over his head.

The next I knew I was laying on a cot with a bandage around my face and three doctors standing over me.

In a little while I had regained my senses enough to find I had been taken into the nearest house, when I was picked up. The man who picked me up reported me dead, but when the doctors came they said I was only unconscious and would recover if I had no internal injuries. I was unconscious for four hours, and my face was a solid scab in the morning, but I got over it, and am alive and well now, but I don't think I shall try riding a broncho again for a long time.

My Ride on a Locomotive.

(By Burton La Roy, Orillia, Ontario.)

For the last three years I have gone to school on the morning express, and come back on the regular way freight. Several times I have come very nearly being hurt, while riding home on the freight, but one night about two months ago I had a very narrow escape from death, which eclipsed all my

other escapes, and which I will never look back to without a shudder. It happened as follows:

Immediately after school I went down to the station to wait for the way freight, which does not leave till six o'clock. An engine and caboose were standing in the station yard, on the point of moving out. The driver, who, of course, knew me, told me to jump in and ride out with him, as they were going out my way. I climbed in and sat down beside the fireman.

About two miles out the fireman left his seat to put on some coal, and as we were nearing a crossing I stepped across the cab to ring the bell. I had no sooner arose than there came a terrible crash, something struck me on the head and I fell senseless. When I came to, a few minutes after, I found myself stretched out on a bench in the caboose, and the conductor was bathing my face with water. I had a raging headache, but otherwise was uninjured. Upon inquiry, I soon learned the cause of the accident. The left driving shaft had broken in two, and following the wheel around had struck the cab, cutting through the fireman's seat and smashing everything with which it came in contact. Had I remained sitting a fifth of a second longer I would have been instantly killed and scattered along the track in pieces. As it was, the only injury which I received was the blow from the large splinter. The train crew fixed up the engine so that it could run with steam on one side only and I was taken home. I was unable to leave my bed for a couple of days, but I am inclined to believe that the thought of what I had escaped had almost as much to do with my illness as the injury itself.

My Fight With a Wildcat.

(By John W. Davis, Mystic, Iowa.)

Reading your BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY—in fact, I read all the Street & Smith weeklies—I read about your prize contest and this is my anecdote:

In the fall of 1897 a chum of mine and I were going to town three miles from where we lived. We had two dogs with us. We were going through some woods and there was a wheat field on the right of us. We sat down to rest when suddenly we saw one of the dogs run something out of the wheat.

It ran up a tree and we saw that it was a wildcat.

There was a ditch near by filled with stones. I picked up a stone and threw it at the cat. Then the cat made a jump for me and would have got me if one of the dogs had not jumped up and caught it and the dog and cat rolled in the ditch. I and my chum each got a club, and commenced to help the dogs as much as we could. The wildcat would pick up the dogs and shake them like a cat shakes a mouse.

We helped the dogs kill the cat and then we went on to town thinking that we would get the cat as we went home, but when we got to where we had killed it we could not find it.

Caught in a Burning Building.

(By John Noon, Toledo, Ohio.)

Every summer I spend part of my vacation down at my Uncle Joe's farm, and it was during one of these visits that my adventure took place.

I had been up later than usual upon this particular evening, and just as I was about to retire to bed I detected, or thought I detected, the scent of smoke. It passed off in a moment, however, and without giving the subject any further thought, I went to bed, and was soon sound asleep.

Suddenly I was awakened by a volume of smoke pouring into my room, and by hearing loud cries of "Fire! fire!"

Confused as I was by being so suddenly and rudely awakened, and choked and blinded by the dense smoke, I rushed about the room, frantically seeking for some avenue of escape. Finally I found the door, already partly open, and dashed, gasping and choking, out into the corridor. The smoke was not so dense here, and it did not take me long to discover that both floors of the house, including the stairway, were almost entirely in flames.

By this time the flames had well-nigh enveloped my own room, and the only way of escape left open was by a window at the end of the corridor, overlooking the barnyard, and as my room was on the second floor, it was quite a distance to the ground. I at once made for this window, and throwing it

open, commenced to shout for help. But the roar of the flames drowned the sound of my voice.

The fire was rapidly creeping along the corridor. Most of the house was already in ruins, and I knew that if someone did not come to my assistance very soon, I would have to take the chances and jump for it.

But a very few minutes had elapsed since I made my escape from the room, and I knew that the rest of the household were busy making their own escape, and had but little time to think of others. Nevertheless, I continued to shout for help, but received no response.

A few minutes more and the flames had reached me. I saw there was nothing to do but to jump. I climbed onto the windowsill, poised myself for a moment and made the leap. It seemed an age till I reached the ground, and then—

"Wal, youngster, you had a narrow escape, I tell ye; I came round the corner of ther house in time ter see you land on ther ground, an' a minute later the roof fell in."

Uncle Joe was the speaker. I had come to in bed, and found Uncle Joe and Aunt Ruth, and a neighboring lady, at whose house we were, at my bedside.

Two days later I was out of bed, and almost as sound as ever. The origin of the fire was never discovered, but Uncle Joe said he thought it was caused by a defective flue.

The Time We Saw a Ghost.

(By Robert Winnie, Philadelphia, Pa.)

It was May 27, two years ago, when it happened, and I remember it well. I live in West Philadelphia, near a large brickyard. Frank and Edgar, two of my friends, and I decided to play hookey from school. I made love to a pack of cards from home, and went to the brickyard to meet Eddie and Frankie. We had just stopped playing on account of the darkness when a loud, unearthly screech rent the air. Ed started to cry.

"I want to g-g-g-go home," he sobbed, but was afraid to move. Something white started to come, noiselessly, toward us, and Ed almost fainted. I threw a brick at it, but I missed it. Frank started to promise me not to play hookey any more when Ed, with a wild yell, darted, like a streak of lightning, straight at the ghost.

The ghost must have been shocked at such unheard of rudeness, for it toppled right over.

Then we all ran, the ghost after us.

We were too fast for him, so he soon gave up.

All of a sudden we heard yells of laughter behind us. We didn't stop to see what it was, but ran straight home. Next day, in school, every one was laughing at us. A fellow had seen us going to the brickyard and, after calling a dozen friends, dressed up in a sheet, and let out that awful yell. Eddie is now very superstitious.

A Desperate Escape.

(By Charles Loupret, New London, Conn.)

This incident which I am about to write occurred three Sundays ago.

We had been in the woods all day and had started for home. We had to cross a small trestle bridge which crossed a stream. We got about half way across when we heard a train coming at full speed in back of us.

We started to run, and John Newcomb and Ernest got over all right, but my foot slipped, and I fell between the ties. The train was about five yards from me when I dropped from where I hung and fell into the stream, and I had to swim ashore. I got a good cold from my ducking and I am not over it yet.

A Terrible Dream.

(By William Dynart, New Orleans, La.)

I wish to tell you of the escape I had from death last summer. I was in bed in a four-story building and heard the cry of fire and I went to the window, and I saw the blaze almost up to the fourth story. I ran from one end of the room to the other, and all at once I saw a rope thrown up to me, and I

tied it on the bedpost, and I went down it. When I got down I saw a big gang of white and colored men. They had pistols and guns, and I was trying to get through the crowd when a colored boy came up to me and said, "White boy, I am going to kill you?" and I said, "You jast try," and I pulled out a pistol, and the whole gang of colored boys and colored men came, and they fired a shot and shot me in the leg. I became so weak I did not know what to do, and I called for help, but nobody came out, for they were afraid of the colored men, for they would shoot them. I cried once more, and my mother came out and another lady and man, and they picked me up. I was like dead, but they brought me to a lady's house in the block, and let me lay there, and all at once I saw the gang of men coming in the alleyway. They wanted to burn me, and my mother said, "You cannot burn him unless you burn me!" and I jumped up out of bed and I said that I would stand off the gang. I was shot in the leg again, and I fell to the ground. They were about to shoot again when I cried, "They are about to shoot," and the lady in the room fell over me. I cried, "What is the matter?" Just as I said that the lady was shot and fell on top of me, and the gang ran out on the street and picked up rocks and stones, and they threw them at the house and shot a hole in the wall, and the big gang of white men came along, and they ran the colored men and shot two of them.

When I got well I went out in the woods with a boy. His name is A. Fitzgerald. He is a good shooter, and he told me to get up in front in case of anything attacking us. I got up in the lead, and all at once I heard the sound of a gun, and called to Fitzgerald. He came and he said it was a bear, and he said give me room and I got out of the way, and he shot and missed the bear, and the bear was just to come when he shot again and killed him.

A Stolen Ride on a Freight.

(By George Stitges, Shamokin, Pa.)

Several friends and I used to be in the habit of taking rides on freight trains between our town and another small one. Well, one day three of us took a ride down the road, as we called it, and enjoyed ourselves until another freight came our way. We all three boarded it, and crawled on top of a house car to enjoy the breeze.

As we were going at about twenty miles an hour a slight noise happened to catch my attention. There was a man crawling up.

Now, it wasn't anything out of the way to see a man there, but he was a terror to us. He was a railroad officer. I quickly warned my two friends, who hurriedly gained their feet and jumped to the next car, which had sides four feet high.

I was going to follow their example, but not being as active as they, as I once had my ankle injured, I didn't make it, but struck between the cars and losing my balance, fell down. I managed to grab the couplers, but several times I felt my feet strike the ties. I quickly found my voice, and began to shout for help.

The officer quickly came to my help and dragged me out of my dangerous position and gave me a few good kicks and told me never to be seen around there again. I took his advice.

Lost in the Woods.

(By M. Gilmour, London, Ont., Canada.)

Last August I was up north working in the lumber woods for the Haliburton Lumber Company, when the following incident happened.

As I was expecting several letters for me at the Ingoldsby post office, which was eight miles from the camp. I determined to risk a night trip over the trail to procure them. I left the camp at four o'clock in the afternoon and arrived at the post office about half-past six, but as several of my letters demanded an immediate reply, it was after ten o'clock when I started over the trail for the camp on the Blue Hawk River. The night was inky-black, but as the first four miles lay along a settler's clearing. I experienced no difficulty to speak of. After passing the settler's clearing the trail plunged into thick woods, and the trail was hard to follow.

On I plunged, stumbling over dead trees and stumps, not

knowing whether I was on the path or not, every now and then lighting a match to see whether I was on the trail till I burned all but two matches, which I determined to keep for an emergency.

As I was peering ahead into the darkness I saw something shining in front of me. I stooped down and saw that I was standing on the edge of the Blue Hawk River. Another step and I would have fallen into it. After another half an hour of stumbling about I ran into a white birch tree, and as I tore slabs of the bark off I determined to light a fire and camp right where I was till morning came, when I could find the trail.

I soon had a good fire blazing, and choosing a soft spot I settled myself for the remainder of the night.

Several times I dozed off, but I was awakened by the crackling of twigs nearby, but seeing nothing I dozed off again and when I awoke again day was breaking and the fire had gone out. I had no difficulty in finding the trail and arrived at the camp in time for breakfast.

Burned Out.

(By Michael McCarthy, Boston, Mass.)

I am a constant reader of all of your Buffalo Bill stories, having read them from No. 1 up to the present number. I have written a little anecdote which happened when I was but eight years old. One night I was wakened out of my dreams by the gongs of the fire engines. My younger brother, Willie, was lying beside me. The room was full of smoke. There was no doubt of it, the fire was in our house. Young as I was, still I knew all the horrors of a fire, and pondered over a terrible death in the fire.

I snatched up my baby brother, then one year and a half old, and rushed through the flames as quickly as I could. I staggered down the first flight of stairs, and my burden seemed to grow heavier at every step. My arms were aching

with the terrible strain upon them. I had reached the door when I fell down exhausted. A glad shriek from my mother; as Willie was snatched from my arms. That was the last thing I heard. When I awoke I found myself the hero of the hour.

A High Jump.

(By John M. Rigney, Jersey City, N. J.)

One day last August I was going to see my aunt in Lafayette, and I thought I would make a short cut by the railroad, so I went along the Central Railroad tracks. There is a little bridge going across the Morris Canal between the right and left-hand track. Well, as I was going over it reading a book, I got as far as the middle of the bridge when I heard a whistle and looking up I saw a locomotive coming on the left track. I looked back and there was a regular passenger train coming from Newark bearing down fast on me. I could not run either way without being hit. I forgot to drop on my stomach and lie flat till they would pass, and there I stood with the canal under me about seventy-five feet. I didn't want to be killed so what did I do but step back a foot and jump high in the air just as the locomotive rushed by me, and I dove down into the canal. I struck bottom and dove up and swam to the right of the shore, and crawled out, very much frightened, and ran home and changed my clothes. The locomotive stopped, as they thought I was killed. A boy by the name of Michael Macguire saw me jump.

Caught in a Connecting Shaft.

(By Herman Schwarzer, St. Louis, Mo.)

One day while I was playing around a factory my clothes caught in a connecting shaft two feet from the wall, and I was thrown violently to the ground. I braced myself against a post, thus saving myself from a terrible death. Although no bones were broken, I was so badly bruised that I could not stand.

BOYHOODS OF FAMOUS MEN.

This department contains each week the story of the early career of some celebrated American. Watch for these stories and read them, boys. They are of the most fascinating interest.

Those already published are: No. 1—Buffalo Bill; No. 2—Kit Carson; No. 3—Texas Jack; No. 4—Col. Daniel Boone; Nos. 5 and 6—David Crockett; No. 7—General Sam Houston; Nos. 8 and 9—Lewis Wetzel; Nos. 10 and 11—Capt. John Smith; No. 12—Wild Bill; No. 13—Dr. Frank Powell, the Surgeon Scout.

No. 14.—Buckskin Sam.

(MAJOR SAM S. HALL.)

THE TEXAS RANGER.

The Massachusetts farm, where Sam Hall was born, was not large enough to satisfy his ambition, even when he was a boy of seven, and he longed to go further than the home boundaries, to see more of the world than was possible in his weekly trips to town with his father.

This longing to roam nearly cost him his life when he was in his seventh year, as he went from the hayfields to the woods, and thence on into the hills until when he started upon his return he found that he was lost.

Night was coming on, and with it a storm, so the boy, without crying over his misfortune, set to work to build a brush shelter under which he could sleep and keep dry.

Sam had an eye to what he wanted, found a good spot, and had his shelter ready when night and the storm came together.

He wanted his supper, would like to have had a fire and a gun, but, otherwise, was happy. It was his first adventure, and he was not afraid.

He soon went to sleep in his bed of leaves, and he slept well; but he awoke at dawn very hungry, and set off to find his way home, while he felt a secret joy in having made a hero of himself, though he did have a certain dread of an interview in the woodshed with his father and a leather strap with which he had already become acquainted.

Sam was lost, there was no doubt of that, and he in vain tried to get his bearings.

Suddenly he saw a man and called to him.

The man came at a run, shrieking as he did so, and was wild-eyed, unkempt, and Sam was sorry he had met him, for he brandished a knife as he came, while he called out:

"You have crossed the dead line into my domain, and I shall kill you."

"Crazy!" said Sam to himself, and he picked up a stone.

On rushed the man, waving his knife and crying:

"I will kill you! I will kill you!"

Sam was very properly frightened, and yet he was cool in his throwing the stone with good aim.

It hit the man squarely in the face and down he went, just as the boy heard shouts, and up dashed his father and a number of men on horseback.

Mr. Hall first gave Sam a hugging and then a licking, while the men with him looked after the unconscious crazy man, who had escaped some time before from an asylum.

He was badly hurt, but after being returned to the asylum recovered.

Sam became a hero, and the next Sunday at church was looked at by the boys with envy and admiration.

Sam was herder for his father's sheep and cattle, and he was soon noted as a rider, varying his mounts from a coach horse and mule to his pony and the year old calves, and often tossed so high in the air he feared he would not come down.

He had a pistol and a shotgun, and spent all his change for ammunition to practice with.

Then he decided to go to Texas, and to get money he became a newsboy on the new railroad that had been run through his father's farm.

With the money thus earned he went to New York, and got a position as bellboy in a hotel, and his pay and liberal fees from the guests soon enabled him to get ready to start for Texas.

That night Sam was very tired, and slipped into a vacant room and under the bed for a nap.

He slept long, was awakened by voices, and heard a plot between two men to murder and rob a Texan who was to come there.

Luck favored Sam, for a large iron bed-wrench had been left upon the floor, and he grasped it.

The Texan came, at a signal was attacked, and though the boy could not prevent the fatal knife blow in the victim's back, he struck the assassin heavily upon the head with the wrench, and then threw the iron with an aim that laid the other villain his length upon the floor.

The assassin dropped his knife and fled, Sam rang the bell for help, and the dying Texan told his story, and gave his dying wishes to the boy, which were to take his belt of money and papers to his wife and daughter in Texas.

He also left Sam a handsome sum for all expenses, and the boy, not wishing to be detained by the court, slipped away at night, and started for the Lone Star State, the dreams of his ambition, and when he was only in his sixteenth year.

It was by sailing vessel that Sam started, going on a brig bound to Galveston, and in a storm off the Bahamas one of the passengers was washed overboard and the boy, who could swim like a duck, leaped into the sea and rescued her, after very nearly losing his own life before the two were picked up.

This adventure made Sam a hero with all on board, and a purse was made up for him, which, however, he refused.

The girl he saved was a consumptive, and the shock and drenching she received sent her to her bed, and some days

after she died and was buried at sea in a calm, and by moonlight, and the sad incident made a deep impression upon the reckless boy.

The day that Sam landed at Indianola, he very quickly discovered that it was a very tough place. But he made the acquaintance of a man who had been a famous Indian fighter, but had turned boss of a wagon train, and learning that he was to start with his wagons for San Antonio, that the trail would carry him near San Saba, where was the home of the Texan killed in New York, he decided to go that way, for those were not the days of railroads.

As Sam was talking to the wagon boss up dashed a cowboy, followed by two others, and with a yell he gave the boy a cut with his bull whip that made him dance.

Sam grabbed a chair from the piazza, and started for the bully, who had dismounted; but with a spring the ex-Indian fighter was upon the cowboy, who called to his comrades to "kill the man and the boy, too."

But Sam had already Texanized himself with a gun, and he used his revolver with such good aim he dropped one cowboy, who shot at him, from his horse, just as the Indian fighter killed the other, the third flying in terror.

"I'm in Texas, and I'm learning," muttered Sam, and he thanked the wagon boss, who said:

"You'll do, my boy, for you've got it in you."

"You go as my guest along to San Saba," and so it was that Sam started upon his prairie life under a very thorough teacher, and took to his teachings far more than he ever had to those of the one who taught the country school near his Massachusetts home.

The trail to San Antonio was a delightful one to Sam, who enjoyed hunting, driving the oxen, cooking the meals and listening to the campfire stories.

When the trail ran near to San Saba, that is within sixty miles of it, Sam, who had bought a good horse and weapons, with a complete outfit, started off alone to find the ranch of the dead Texan, to whom he was anxious to keep his pledge.

The wagon boss directed him how to go; but there were no trails, and Sam had to depend upon himself.

His first night alone upon the prairie was a dismal one, with the wolves howling about his little camp.

The next day Sam was sure that he had gone wrong, for night again fell with not the sign of a habitation near.

A severe storm came up also, and no shelter near.

He held on, hoping to find some timber in which to camp, and at last did so, but at the same time saw a campfire, and around it several Indians.

This gave Sam a shock, and he was wondering what to do when the Indians rose, mounted their ponies and disappeared, so the youth decided to take advantage of their fire as he was very cold and hungry.

But just then he heard yells and shots in the distance, and he at once rode in the direction from whence the sounds came.

"Where there was fighting there must be white men as well as redskins," Sam argued.

Sam had not fought Indians, but he was full of nerve, a good shot and very shrewd, and he might be of service, he thought.

And he was, for he came in sight of a cabin, before which brush had been piled and set on fire, while the Indians were in the background.

Sam did not hesitate at the consequences to himself, but fired and brought down an Indian.

But seen by the other Indians, who turned to fly, one fired an arrow, which killed the youth's horse; but catching on his feet, as nimbly as a cat, he again fired, and shouted as for others near to come on.

His second shot also got its redskin, and out of the cabin came a woman and a boy, who began to fight the fire, dragging it away from the door.

"We'd have been killed but for you, as my husband is away from home, and those Indians knew it."

"Come in and have supper," said the woman, gazing at the slender, handsome youth.

This Sam was more than glad to do, and without a thought of the Indian who had escaped, the two dead ones were taken to an outhouse, the saddle and traps taken off his horse, and he went into the cabin and greatly enjoyed the supper the good woman prepared for him, while he slept without dreams that night in a bed, the first time for weeks.

The next day the settler returned with his supplies from the military trading post, and he warmly welcomed Sam, praised him highly for his good work for his family, and gave him a really good horse, which he would accept no pay for.

Sam stayed another night at the cabin, and then the settler rode with him to the trail leading to San Saba, and told him just how how to go to reach the ranch he sought.

Safely Sam arrived at Fort San Saba, and the military was something he greatly enjoyed, while all were surprised to know that he had dared come alone from the San Antonio trail.

"I wished to learn to rely upon myself," said the youth, who then said that he wished to go to the Kenedy Ranch near the Concho.

"The country is full of Indians, so you must wait until a party goes that way," he was told.

There was an old plainsman at the fort, who was known as Leather Legs, and learning that the boy had come to San Saba alone and was going to the Kenedy Ranch, he said that was the way his trail led, and he would take him along with him.

"Boy pard, yer took desprit chances, you did; but you go with me an' I'll larn yer pararer ways, you bet," said old Leather Legs.

Sam was glad of the chance to learn, and all told him that he could have no better teacher, so the two started together.

On the trail Sam drank in all that the old hunter was willing to tell him, and when some fifteen miles from his destination old Leather Legs halted and said:

"Pard, ther Kenedy Ranch lies yonder, an' you kin find it, so I'll go my way now.

"Sometime I want yer take a hunt with me, either fer big game or redskins, and I'll look yer up, fer yer is all right, ef yer hain't been long around."

Sam thanked the old man, and they parted, and after a ride of several hours he rode up to a large cabin, built on a rise and surrounded by the prairie.

There were a number of saddled horses about the cabin, and a large crowd upon the piazza, and as Sam rode up a man called out:

"We don't know yer, young man, but all is welcome ter-day ter see ther weddin'."

"What wedding?" cried Sam, eagerly.

"Mr. Ramsay ter ther cap'n's darter, ther sweetest gal in Texas."

Sam felt a misgiving of harm, for the young man who had plotted in the hotel room in New York to kill the Texan, Luke Kenedy, and escaped, had been named Ramsey, the dying man had told him, and he lived in Texas.

Sam at once entered the cabin, as all were called in and the minister stood with the intended bride and groom before him.

At a glance Sam recognized the man whom he had seen kill Captain Kenedy, and he sprang forward, a revolver in his hand now, and cried:

"Don't marry that man, miss, for he killed your father in New York, and I saw him do it!"

This created a wild scene, the girl uttering a wild cry, the man an oath, but Sam had him covered, and called out:

"I have your father's papers and money, miss, given to me by Captain Kenedy to bring to his wife, and that man is a murderer.

"Is there no one here to arrest him?"

No one moved and Sam went on to tell all he had heard of the plot, from under the bed, and added that Captain Kenedy had sent him with his effects, and that he had just arrived.

The accused man laughed, said that his own story was true, that he had held Captain Kenedy's hand when he died, as the New York papers would prove, and he made a sudden spring to attack Sam, a knife in his hand.

But Sam was looking for just such an attack, and his revolver flashed, the man falling dead at the boy's feet.

When Sam again told his story, Kate Kenedy driving back the cowboys from the Ramsey ranch who wanted to hang him, and he showed the watch, money and papers of Captain Kenedy, with the scraps from the papers of how a hotel bell-boy had thwarted the murderers, Mrs. Kenedy and her daughter could no longer doubt, and the girl who had so narrowly escaped marrying the slayer of her father, was the first to welcome her rescuer, and say:

"You shall be my brother, and our protector, now father is dead."

As Captain Kenedy had gone to New York to get possession of a fortune he had inherited there, the mother and daughter determined to go to that city to live, giving up the wild life on a Texas ranch.

They urged Sam to go with them, but he had come to Texas to make his home there, and he would not leave.

But Sam escorted the mother and daughter to Austin by stage, and had an adventure with road-agents, in which he killed one, saved all the passengers being robbed, and the driver of the coach being wounded, he drove the rest of the trail to the relay station.

After the departure of the Kenedys Sam was arrested and thrown into prison, on the charge that he had been seen among a band of outlaws who held up a stage.

He had no friends near and could only declare his innocence, when brought to trial, and found his accuser to be none other than the cowboy who had escaped the day at Indianola when the old Indian fighter took his part.

So he told why he was accused for revenge. But it would have gone hard with Sam had not the wounded stage driver, hearing of his arrest, gone to Austin and told his story, and the youth was at once released, while his accuser, still seeking revenge, was shot by Sam in a street duel and badly wounded.

Sam next took the trail for San Antonio, and then he met a youth several years his senior and the two went off in a hunt together, camping for half a year in a very dangerous country, and having several brushes with hostile Indians.

Going to the military post of San Saba, Sam again met old Leather Legs, and for over a year he remained with the old hunter, until he went on a ranch as cowboy and later joined the Texas Rangers.

Though yet under twenty-five, his daring deeds, splendid horsemanship, dead-shot shooting and skill with a lariat, caused him to be made a lieutenant in the Ranger Company.

A year later, in a desperate battle with Cortinas and his Mexican bandits, the captain of the Rangers was killed, and Sam was made captain, none disputing the honor which he had so bravely won.

It was not long before Sam became noted as a scout and an Indian fighter, while he was merciless in his fights against Mexican outlaws, who crossed the Rio Grande to raid upon Americans.

In personal encounters forced upon him, his quickness and deadly aim always won, while, on account of his size, and coming from New England, he won the name of "Little Yankee," while, as he always dressed in a handsome buckskin suit, he was named Buckskin Sam.

Captured by the Mexicans when he was spying to discover the outlaw strongholds, he was sentenced to be shot, but escaped by leaping up behind the chief, holding the latter's revolver to his back and spurring the horse away at full speed.

Coming to a horse feeding near he made the chief mount him, and escaped his pursuers, carrying his prisoner across the Rio Grande to the Rangers' camp, where he was promptly hanged for his crimes.

Many were the battles Sam Hall and his Rangers fought with Indians and outlaws, until the captain became a most noted and greatly feared leader.

When the civil war broke out Sam and his Rangers joined the Southern army, and he rendered valuable service, until a severe wound caused him to return to Texas to live upon his ranch.

To dwell upon the wild and daring life led by the Yankee boy who had left his Massachusetts home to win fame in Texas is impossible in a short sketch like this, so I can only add that Major Sam Stone Hall turned hotel keeper after the war, then moved to Wilmington, Delaware, where the writer and Buffalo Bill, who greatly admired him, visited him just prior to his death from consumption.

No more through the air will his lasso swing—
No more on prairie will his rifle ring—
The deadly trails his feet have trod
Will know him no more—he has gone to God.

Buckskin Sam lies buried in Wilmington's beautiful cemetery—may he rest in peace.

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